# THE
# BHĀGAVATA PURĀṆA

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## SKANDHA TENTH

## CHAPTER ONE

*The King (Parikṣit) said* :

1. Your worship has been pleased to narrate the detailed account of the Lunar and Solar dynasties and also the extremely wonderful exploits of kings, born in both these families.

2. (You have also described) especially the race of Yadu, of extremely pious nature. Oh the best of Sages ! Do you now be pleased to describe to us the great deeds of Lord Viṣṇu who incarnated in his family, along with his part-manifestation (*aṁśa* viz. Balarāma).

3. Please recount to us in details all those deeds that the Almighty Lord, the Maker (Protector) and the Soul of all beings, performed after incarnating in Yadu's race.

4. What man other than a slaughterer will desist from (listening to) the recital of the excellent attributes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, of auspicious glory—glory constantly sung by those who are freed from the influence of desires (and are liberated), a specific remedy for (release from) *saṁsāra*, and extremely pleasant to the ears and the mind.

5. Using Him (Kṛṣṇa) as a raft, my grandfathers (i.e. grandfather Arjuna and granduncles such as Yudhiṣṭhira), crossed the ocean in the form of the Kaurava army, so difficult to tide over, due to its being infested with monstrous whales in the form of unrivalled (chariot-riding) warriors like Bhīṣma and others, the vanquishers of even celestials in battles, contemptuously treating it (the ocean-like army) like a (shallow) depression caused by a calf's hoof.

6. And armed with a discus (*Sudarśana*), He entered the womb of my mother (Uttarā) who sought his refuge and protected this body of mine—the seed for the continuity of the races of Kurus and Pāṇḍavas—while it (my body) was being scorched by the missile (*Brahmāstra*) discharged by Aśvatthāman, Droṇā's son.

7. Oh learned sage, be pleased to recount to me (for my benefit), the glorious exploits of him (Kṛṣṇa) who has assumed human form through his Māyā-power, and who pervades all embodied beings internally and externally, and who, as an Inner Controller and as a Destroyer (Time-Spirit)—severally dispenses Liberation to the spiritually-minded ("inner-seers") and death, i.e. *saṁsāra*, to those with worldly propensities.

8. Balarāma alias Saṅkarṣaṇa was (first) stated by you to be the son of Rohiṇī (vide *supra* 9.24.46). How could he be connected with the womb of Devakī (vide *supra* 9.24.54) without assuming another body ?

9. Why for did glorious Mukunda (Lord Kṛṣṇa) migrate from his father's residence to Vraja ? Where (in what places) did the Lord of Sātvatas (gods or a clan of Yadus) settle down with his kinsmen ?

10. What were the activities (lit. did he do) of Keśava while residing at Vraja, as well as in Mathurā, the city founded by demon Madhu ? Why did he personally kill Kaṁsa, his mother's brother who, as such, did not deserve it.

11. After assuming human body, for how many years did he stay at Dvārakā along with Vṛṣṇis (Yādavas)? How many were the consorts of the Lord ?

12. Oh Omniscient Sage ! It behoves you to describe in details to me, a faithful devotee, this and every other deed performed by Kṛṣṇa.

13. Though I have given up even drinking of water in this (life-long) fast, this extremely unbearable hunger does not torment me, as I drink the nectar of Hari's stories flowing from the moon-lotus in the form of your mouth.

*Sūta said :*

14. Oh Śaunaka, having listened to the laudable inquiry, the worshipful son of Vyāsa (Śuka) who was the foremost among the votaries of viṣṇu, complimented king Parīkṣit (one protected by Viṣṇu) and commenced to extol the life and episodes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, which destroy the sins and impurities of Kali (Or which remove the miseries of *saṁsāra.*)

*Śrī Śuka said* :

15. Oh foremost among saintly kings ! Your mind has been properly directed, inasmuch as the utmost and firmest devotion to the stories of Vāsudeva has been engendered in you.

16. Inquiries about the stories of Vāsudeva certainly purify all the three persons concerned, namely, the reciter, the inquirer and the members of the audience, just as water washing his feet i.e. the Gaṅgā (Or the water washing Śālagrāma) purifies all.

17. Mother Earth which was overburdened with the crushing weight of millions and millions of the hosts of Daityas who assumed the guise of arrogant kings, sought refuge to god Brahmā.

18. Taking the form of a depressed and piteously lowing cow and with her face overflowing with tears, she approached god Brahmā's presence and represented to him her grievous plight.

19. Realizing the piteous condition of the earth, god Brahmā accompanied by the three-eyed god Śiva and other gods, came to the shore of the milky ocean, along with her.

20. After reaching there, he with perfect concentration of mind, praised in terms of the Puruṣa-Śūkta the Supreme Person, the Lord of the world, the god of gods, the absolutely blissful Enjoyer of sacrifices.

21. Listening to the voice uttered in the sky while he was meditating (upon the Lord), god Brahmā spoke out to the celestials, "Oh immortals, hear from me the words of the Supreme Person and comply immediately with them. Let there be no delay."

22. The affliction of Mother Earth was already understood by the Supreme Person before we appealed to him. You should now take birth in the Yadu Clan, in your part-manifestation, while the Lord of gods will walk over the earth, reducing its burden through his potency called Time.

23. The glorious Supreme Lord will directly manifest Himself in the house of Vasudeva. Let the heavenly damsels be born (on the earth) to minister to his pleasures.

23—A. VR's text adds :

As commanded by him, let the sages be made, to assume the form of cattle for the purpose of propitiating Lord Viṣṇu by yielding him milk, Oh gods.

24. The self-effulgent thousand-faced Lord Śeṣa imbued with a part of Vāsudeva, will be born as the elder brother, with a view to catering to his pleasures.

25. The divine Yoga-Māyā of Viṣṇu who has deluded the world, has been commanded to take birth in part-manifestation for fulfilling his mission."

*Śri Śuka said* :

26. Having directed the hosts of gods in this way, and consoling the Earth in reassuring words, god Brahmā, the Ruler of Prajāpatis, repaired to his exalted region.

27. In former times, Śūrasena, the chief of the Yadu clan, ruled over the territories of Mathurā and Śūrasena, while residing in the city of Mathurā.

28. Thenceforth, Mathurā became the metropolis of all kings of the Yādava dynasty. In that city, the glorious Lord Hari ever exhibits his presence in a special way.

29. In that city, on one occasion, Vasudeva, son of Śūra, whose marriage with Devakī was celebrated, ascended the chariot with his newly wedded wife, to proceed to his place after marriage.

30. Kaṁsa, the son of Ugrasena, being desirous of pleasing his sister (cousin), took over the reins of the horses, surrounded by hundreds of gold-plated chariots.

31-32. At the time of departure, Devaka who was fond of his daughter, gave, as wedding presents, four hundred elephants caparisoned with gold chains, fifteen thousand horses, eighteen hundred chariots and two hundred comely maidservants, adorned with gold ornaments.

33. As the procession of the bride and the bridegroom started, conchs, clarionets, drums and kettle-drums were sounded simultaneously in the most auspicious manner.

34. On the way, an incorporeal voice from the sky addressed Kaṁsa who was holding the reins: "Oh foolish fellow, the eighth son from the womb of her whom you are conducting, shall slay you".

35. Being thus warned, the wicked sinful fellow, who was a disgrace to the Bhoja family, with a sword in hand, seized his sister by her braids of hair and proceeded to kill her.

36. The great-souled Vasudeva pleaded in conciliatory terms with the cruel, shameless perpetrator of disgraceful deeds.

*Vasudeva urged* :

37. You possess virtues extolled by the brave and are the glory to the Bhoja family. As such how is it that you (attempt to) kill your sister on the festive occasion of her marriage.

38. (If you say that you are doing so as a precautionary measure), death is born along with the body of all creatures, Oh warrior ! Death is inevitable to all creatures, whether it may be today or at the end of hundred years.

39. When the body is on the point of dissolving in five component-Elements (i.e. at the time of death), the Soul residing in it automatically, under the force of his *karmas* (as good as) obtains another body and quits his previous frame.

40. Just as a man while walking, stands with his one foot established on the earth, while the other paces forward, or just as a caterpillar leaves the (previous) blade of grass only when it catches the hold of another, similarly does an embodied being, caught in the current of *karmas*.

41. Just as a person whose mind is obsessed with a strong desire, and who is mentally brooding over the objects of his desires, with his mind deeply impressed by what he has seen or heard, seems to realize it in dreams, and identifies himself with it, for getting himself (his body in the waking state). So does the soul attain his new body quitting the old one.

42. To whatever modification of five *bhūtas* created by *Māyā* that the mind consisting of various emotions and passions feels impelled by destiny, and flows to it, and is attached at the time of death, the soul abiding in the body identifies itself with it and passes into that form along with the mind.

42a. Being impelled by Destiny, the mind, consisting of emotions and passions, feels impelled to, flows to and is attached to (at the time of death) whatever modifications of the five *Bhūtas* created by Māyā, the soul abiding in the body identifies itself with that form, and passes into it along with the mind.

43. Just as a luminous body (e.g. the Sun or the Moon) which, when reflected in water in an earthen container, appears to move or change according to the speed of the wind that ruffles the liquid reflecting medium (though actually—the original luminary—does not shake), so does the embodied soul, through attachment, enter the bodies or forms created by his own Māyā and is overcome with delusion.

44. Therefore, a person being so conditioned but seeking his own welfare, should not do wrong to anyone. For there is fear to the wrong-doers from others (such as god of death, the person wronged etc.).

45. This poor girl, your younger sister, is just like a daughter to you (or a lifeless doll). It does not become you who are kind to the helpless, to kill her who has just completed the marriage rites.

*Śrī Śuka continued* :

46. Oh descendant of Kuru ! Even though admonished with conciliatory words and words inspiring fear (of dire consequences), the relentless Kaṁsa, following the ways of demons, did not desist (from his determination).

47. Observing his firm determination (to kill Devakī), Vasudeva thought for a while how to avert this imminent danger for the time being, and devised the following expedient for it.

48. (He thought to himself :) "An intelligent person should try to avert death to the utmost limit of his intellectual and physical abilities. So if, despite these, it could not be warded off, no blame will be attached to him.

49. I shall rescue this helpless girl by promising in exchange handing over of her sons to Death (viz. Kaṁsa who is going to kill them), provided the sons are born or he (Kaṁsa) does not die in the meanwhile.

50. Or might not the contrary take place (i.e. my son might kill him), unscrutable are the ways of the Providence; for the imminent may be averted and what is averted may happen again.

51. Just as, in a forest conflagrations, there is no apparent cause (except Fate) for its coming in contact with a parti-

cular tree or remaining aloof from another, so also in the case of a created being, the cause of its being—associated or dissociated with a particular body is very difficult to be comprehended."

52. Having carefully considered (this problem) to the best of his intellectual capacity, Vasudeva respectfully addressed the wicked fellow, with (apparently) great esteem.

53. Simulating a blooming lotus-like (cheerful) countenance, in spite of his heart full of pain, he smilingly spoke to that hard-hearted and shameless fellow.

*Vasudeva said*:

54. Oh gentle-natured Kaṁsa! There is certainly no fear to you from this girl as has been intimated to you by the incorporeal voice from the sky. I shall handover to you her sons from whom you apprehend danger.

*Śrī Śuka said*:

55. Kaṁsa, who properly understood the significance of Vasudeva's words, desisted from killing his sister (Devakī). Even Vasudeva who was pleased, extolled him and entered his palace.

56. After a lapse of time, in due course, Devakī who was devoted to the Lord who is the soul of all deities and was permeated with the divinities, gave birth to eight sons and a daughter, one every year.

57. Vasudeva who (by nature) was intensely agitated to act falsely, handed over with great pains his first born son, Kīrtimān, to Kaṁsa.

58. What is there which a truthful person (like Vasudeva) cannot endure? Is there anything which the knowers of the truth (that the Lord alone is the reality) long for? (Did Vasudeva think that Kaṁsa would spare his child when handed over personally? No.). There is nothing which the wicked would not do. (How is it that Devakī parted with the child?) What thing would they not sacrifice who cherish Hari in their hearts?

59. Seeing the equanimity and firmness in truth of Vasudeva Kaṁsa was highly pleased with him and spoke to him smilingly : Oh King.

60. "Let this boy return (to his mother) as there is no danger from him to me, as my death has been ordained from your eighth child."

61. Taking back his son in compliance of Kaṁsa's words, Vasudeva returned home. He was however not happy over the words of that wicked Kaṁsa of uncontrolled mind.

61A. Additional verse in VJ.'s text :

Then the divine sage Nārada, the son of Brahmā, called upon Kaṁsa, and conferring with him privately spoke as follows.

62-63. "Whatever cowherds of whom Nanda is the chief, there are in Vraja and again all their women and all Vṛṣṇis headed by Vasudeva and Yādava women of whom Devakī is the foremost—all the kinsmen, relations and friends of both Nanda and Vasudeva who are loyal to Kaṁsa—are mostly gods. : (while) those who are the followers of Kaṁsa.

63—A. VR.'s text adds :

Are verily all *asuras* who trouble the world."

64. (Considering that the Lord would not incarnate earlier by Kaṁsa's such peaceful attitude) Nārada approached Kaṁsa and advised him as above, apprising him of the endeavours made (by god Brahmā and others) for the annihilation of Daityas who became a burden to the earth.

65. On the departure of the sage, Kaṁsa looked upon all Yadus as gods and every child born of Devakī as Viṣṇu intent upon slaying himself.

66. Fettering Devakī and Vasudeva in chains, he imprisoned them in their house and killed every new-born child, fearing him to be god Viṣṇu.

67. Generally, the kings on the earth who are covetous and thirsty after the lives of others, kill their mother, father, brothers and all friends as well.

68. Realising himself to be the great *asura* Kālanemi whom Viṣṇu had formerly killed, born here again, he commenced hostilities with Yādavas.

69. Being endowed with enormous power, he arrested his father Ugrasena, the king of Yādavas, Bhojas and Andhakas and took over the government of the Śūrasena region.

## CHAPTER TWO

*The Lord's descent in Devakī's womb*

*Śrī Śuka continued* :

1-2. Aided by *asuras* like Pralamba, Baka, Cāṇūra, Tṛṇāvarta, Agha (the great devourer), Muṣṭika, Ariṣṭa, Dvivida, Pūtanā, Keśī, Dhenuka and forming an alliance with other *asura* kings like Bāṇa and Bhauma, and with the support of Jarāsandha, the king of Magadha, the mighty Kaṁsa began to harass Yadus.

3. Hard pressed by him, they migrated in disguise to different countries, viz. Kurus, Pāñcālas, Kekayas, Śālvas, Vidarbhas, Niṣadhas, Videhas and Kosalas as well.

4-5. Some of his relatives, however, continued to serve him obediently. When Kaṁsa, the son of Ugrasena, killed six sons of Devakī, a part of the lustre of Lord Viṣṇu, known as Ananta, became the seventh child entering Devakī's womb who enhanced her joy and grief at the same time.

6. Being cognisant of the fear caused by Kaṁsa to Yadus, his proteges, he commanded his Yoga-Māyā (as follows) :

7. "Oh auspicious goddess ! Do you go to Vraja adorned with residence of cowherds and cows (by their affluence)? There, in the settlement of cowherds headed by Nanda dwells Rohiṇī, the wife of Vāsudeva. His other wives too being apprehensive of Kaṁsa have gone underground (stay in secret places).

8. In the womb of Devakī lies my part-manifestation known as Śeṣa. Taking him from her womb, transfer him to Rohiṇīs womb.

9. I shall then become her son by my part-manifestation (with my full powers[1]) while you will be born of Yaśodā, the wife of Nanda.

10. Recognizing you as the supreme dispenser of boons to persons desirous of progeny and bestower of boons granting all

1. To substantiate the statement *Kṛṣṇastu bhagavān svayam* (Kṛṣṇa is the Almighty Lord himself) ŚR. gives different explanations of *aṁśa-bhāga*. VT. and others endorse ŚR. but Brahma Purāṇa accepts Kṛṣṇa as 'part-manifestation'.

desires, people will worship you with incense, offerings of food and other presents.

11-12. People will erect temples for you on the earth and will designate you with various names such as Durgā, Bhadrakālī, Vijayā, Vaiṣṇavī, Kumudā, Caṇḍikā, Kṛṣṇā, Mādhavī, Kanyakā, Māyā, Nārāyaṇī, Īśānī, Śāradā and Ambikā.

13. Due to his being taken out of the womb of Devakī (and transfer to that of Rohiṇī), he will be known as Saṅkarṣaṇa. As he would give delight to the world, he would be called Rāma, and Bala on account of his eminence among the mighty people.

14. When commanded by the Lord thus, she accepted it with the words, 'Yes ! That will be done'. After circumambulating him, she went down to the earth, and executed his orders.

15. When the child from the womb of Devakī was transferred to that of Rohiṇī by the goddess *Yoga-nidrā*, citizens of Mathurā sorrowfully talked about the miscarriage of Devakī.

16. And the Almighty Lord, who is the soul of the universe, and gives assurance of safety to his votaries, entered the mind of Vasudeva[1], with all his divine potencies in their fullness.

17. Being surcharged with (lit. bearing) the glorious presence of the Supreme Person (Lord Viṣṇu), Vasudeva resplendent like unto the Sun, became unapproachable and unassailable to all created beings.

18. Thereupon, like unto the (eastern) direction bearing the moon, the delighter of all, queen Devakī, refulgent with pure *sattva* conceived in her mind—when conveyed through psychological process (*vedha-dīkṣā*) by Vasudeva—the Lord, the auspiciousness of the world incarnate[2], whose potencies are undiminishing, and who as the indwelling Soul of all, was already present in her.

1. And not through usual physiological process—ŚR.

2. Or : The Lord who, though omnipresent, assumes a limited body for showing His grace to His devotees—ŚR.

19. Like unto the flame of a lamp enclosed by an earthen pot, or like deep scholarship of a narrow-minded person who refuses to impart it (to others), Devakī, though, now the abiding place of the Lord who is the abode of all the universe, did not shine superbly (failed to give delight to the world at large, though she herself enjoyed the ecstasy of the presence of the Lord), as she was (then) imprisoned in the palace of Kaṁsa, the king of Bhojas.

20. When Kaṁsa perceived that Devakī, bearing in her womb the invincible Lord Viṣṇu and beaming with pure smiles, illuminated the whole (prison-) house with her effulgence, he said (to himself), "This is Hari who, intent on robbing me of my life, has certainly entered her (Devakī's) womb, like a lion entering a den, for never before did she appear so brilliant.

21. "What immediate remedy should I now adopt in this matter today? For determined as he is on accomplishing his purpose (viz. serving the interest of gods), he would not desist from his prowess (in killing me, when he is born. Should I finish with Devakī just now, before he is born?—But even a selfish person does not wreck his reputation and prowess by such a deed). For this murder of a woman, my own sister in pregnancy, will forthwith spoil my reputation, prosperity for all time to come and (will affect even) my life as well.

22. He who lives by perpetrating extreme atrocities is as good as dead even during his life-time. People at large pronounce curses upon him while alive. When his body falls dead, he will surely go to the hell of blinding darkness, the destination of those who identify their Souls with their bodies.[1]

23. Reasoning with himself thus, the mighty Kaṁsa desisted (of his own accord) from his darkest design (of killing Devakī). Cherishing inveterate enmity to Lord Hari, he continued to await his birth.

1. VJ.'s text reads :
*dehe mṛte taṁ anu hy artha-kāmau*
*Yaśomalaṁ gaur abhimānino dhruvam /*
When the body of the man who identifies with his Soul becomes defunct his objectives viz. *artha*, *kāma*, his pure reputation, knowledge and emancipation (*mokṣa*) are surely lost to him.

24. Pondering over Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the senses, (suspecting that he may manifest himself at any moment and kill him) while sitting, lying, standing, eating, moving about and drinking, Kaṁsa saw that the whole world was pervaded by Him.[1]

25. Gods Brahmā and Śiva accompanied by sages like Nārada and others (such as Sanaka, Sanandana) and gods along with their attendants arrived at that place, and glorified the Lord who showers all desired boons.

*The gods said* :

26.* We resort as a shelter to you who are of true resolve; to attain to whom, truthfulness is the only highest means; who exist and are the reality in the past, present and future (before the creation, during the subsistence and after the destruction of the universe); the cause and the source of the three elements—the earth, water and fire (aggregatively known as *sat*—) and the wind and the ether (collectively called *tyat* in Tait. Upa 2.6.1); who reside in them as *antaryāmin*; who are the truth of the truth (the highest Reality even after the dissolution of the universe); who are the promulgator of truthful speech and impartially equable vision (towards all) and the embodiment of truthfulness.

1. Kaṁsa was made to think of Him by Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of senses, in all states and actions in life for manifesting himself to Kaṁsa who thus perceived that the world is full of Kṛṣṇa—VB.

* VR. : We have sought shelter in You Who carry out what is avowed by you and are hence of real resolve; Who are distinct from the real world consisting of the sentient (*cid*) and non-sentient (*acid*); Whose body consists of three real entities--Prakṛti, Puruṣa and Time(*kāla*); Whose wish is carried out as you are the controller of the whole world comprising of Prakṛti (Puruṣa etc); Who are the source of the real *prapañca* consisting of the intelligent and non-intelligent (*cid* and *acid*); Who abide in the highest part of the sky; Who are the real of the reals; Who are the director of the Moon (the path of rightcousness) and the Sun (truthfulness); Who are the embodiment of the unmodifiable reality.

VJ. : We sought refuge in You Who are the embodiment of perfect Bliss and Knowledge; absolutely distinct from the Earth and other elements; Who are the main gist of the three Vedas; the source of Prapañca which is a reality; abiding as *antaryāmin* in the world, a reality; the director and donor of the spiritual wisdom and happiness to the world—a reality; Whose blissful essential nature is unaffected.

27.* The primeval tree in the form of (visible) universe has on one base (viz. *Prakṛti*), two fruits (viz. pleasure and pain), three roots (viz. the *guṇas, sattva, rajas* and *tamas*), four kinds of secretions (viz. the objectives of human life, religion, property and wealth, sensual desires and liberation), five attributes (the sense organs), six folds or states (viz. birth, existence, growth, ripeness, decay and destruction or natural affections viz. hunger and thirst, grief and delusion, old age and death), seven kinds of barks (the constituents of the body viz skin, blood, flesh, albumen, bone, marrow and semen), eight branches (the five elements—*bhūtas*, the mind, the reason and the ego), nine hollows (the 'gates' of the body, viz. two sockets of eyes, two cavities of ears, two nostrils, the mouth, the organs of urination and defecation), ten leaves (the vital airs—*prāṇas*), two birds (the individual Soul and the Indwelling Supreme Soul).

28. You alone are the cause of the (above-mentioned tree in the from of) phenomenal universe; You are its resting place (after its dissolution), and You are its protector. Those whose minds (knowledge or wisdom) are clouded by Your Māyā (the deluding potency), look upon you as many, but not so those who possess spiritual wisdom.

29. You are essentially knowledge and consciousness (the internal controller of all). Repeatedly You assume forms for conferring happiness on the mobile and immobile creation. Your forms are purely *sāttvic* (unadulterated with *rajas* and *tamas*). They bring happiness to the righteous and mete out destruction to the wicked.

30. Oh lotus-eyed god, some persons who have fixed their minds through concentration on you, the embodiment of

* (1) VR. interprets *ādi-vṛkṣa* as 'the corporeal body' and its eight branches are hands, feet, neck, chest and stomach and the 'leaves' are ten objects of senses.

(2) VJ. regards the universe as 'the eternal' tree which has Hari as its one (the sole) support, two fruits (viz. *puṇya* and *pāpa*—merit and sin); the three roots are *vyāhṛtis, vedas* or states); four results are heaven, hell, darkness (*tamas*) and emancipation; five special roots are vital airs (*prāṇas*). The rest of details are like ŚR. Hari destroys this tree. Hence Hari's supremacy.

pure *sattva*, easily cross the ocean of *saṁsāra* (as is done by the great) by the raft in the form of your feet as if it (*saṁsāra*) were as insignificant as the shallow footprint of a calf.

31. Oh self-effulgent Lord ! Having themselves crossed the extremely impassable, terrible ocean of *saṁsāra*, those devotees of unbounded friendliness to all creatures have (however) gone to the other side (of *saṁsāra*) leaving behind them the boat in the form of your lotus-like feet (i.e. the path of devotion); for you are gracious unto the righteous.

32. Oh lotus-eyed god ! Those others who follow the path of knowledge and regard themselves as emancipated, get their minds and intellect corrupted due to their lack of devotion to you (or whose mind is clouded, though they are clever in disputations). These persons, attaining with great difficulty to a high state (e.g. birth in a noble family), fall down therefrom, as they feel no respect for your feet.

33. Never do your devotees who have cherished deep affection to you, deviate from the right path that way, Oh Lord of Lakṣmī ! Protected on every side by you, they dauntlessly move about trading over the heads of the commanders of armies of obstacles and impediment, Oh Lord.

34. For the sake of preservation of the world you assume an absolutely pure—*sāttvic*—body which bestows the desired boons (*puruṣārthas*) to embodied beings, and wherewith people (belonging to different *āśramas*—stages in life) worship you by studying the Vedas, performance of religious rituals, Yogic practices, austere penance and deep meditation (worship of the Lord is impossible in the absence of a corporeal form).

35. Oh creator of the universe ! Had you not assumed this absolutely pure *sāttvic* form of yours, the Supreme direct knowledge which thoroughly annihilates ignorance and the notion of difference resulting from it, could not be engendered at all. Your worship can only be inferred (and not realized directly) by the light shed by *guṇas* (or the cognitive senses) as a particular *guṇa* can become in a special way and with a particular person, a source of light or knowledge. (When you are worshipped through your pure *sāttvic* form and the mind becomes one with you, God realization takes place through your grace).

36. Your name and form along with your excellences, deeds and births cannot be comprehended fully and described (as they are divine and super-natural). You are the direct witness of everything, but your nature can only be inferred (and not directly perceived) by the mind and the Vedic words. But Oh self-effulgent Lord ! Your votaries, however, do realize you directly while they are engaged in their acts (of worship and meditation).

37. He who during the performance of his activities has his mind concentrated on your lotus-like feet by hearing, singing, reminding others and contemplating on your auspicious names and forms, does not deserve to be born again (in *saṁsāra*).

38. Fortunately, On Hari ! The heavy burden of this earth which represents your foot, has been removed by the birth (*avatāra*) of Your Lordship. It is our good luck that we shall now see the earth impressed with your auspiciously-marked beautiful foot-prints and the heavens showered with Your mercy.

39. Oh Lord ! Verily we cannot conceive any other reason, except your own pleasure, of assuming a form (birth) that You, the unborn are born. Oh Lord You are eternally free and a shelter from fear. Birth, continuation in life and death in the case of individual Souls are brought through *avidyā* (ignorance about you).

40. Oh Lord ! Now be pleased to protect us and the three worlds and relieve the earth of her heavy burden as you did (in the past) by incarnating Yourself in the form of a fish, a horse (*Hayagriva*), a tortoise, a man-lion (Nṛsiṁha), a boar (Varāha), a swan, a Kṣattriya (Rāma), a Brāhmaṇa (Paraśurāma) and a god (Vāmana). Our salutations to You, Oh the best and foremost of Yadus.

41. (Addressing Devakī) :

"Oh mother (Devakī) ! It is really a good luck that the Supreme Person, the veritable Almighty Lord himself has entered your womb with his *aṁśa* (divine powers which are his parts), for the sake of our welfare. Let there be no more fear from Kaṁsa, the king of Bhojas whose death is imminent. Your son will be the protector of Yadus".

*Śri Śuka said* :

42. Having thus eulogized the Supreme Person whose nature is distinct from the visible universe, the gods headed by Brahmā and Śiva returned to heaven.

## CHAPTER THREE

*Description of the Birth of Śrīkṛṣṇa*

*Śri Śuka continued* :

1. Now came the most auspicious time full of all blessings when the constellation Rohiṇī presided over by god Brahmā, the son of Viṣṇu, was at the ascendant and all constellations of stars (like *Aśvini* and others), planets and stars assumed peaceful aspects.

2. All the directions became clear and propitious (despite the continuation of the rainy season in the month of Śrāvaṇa) the sky became illumined with innumerable clusters of stars shining unobscured; the earth with its towns, villages, settlements of cowherds and mines revelled in auspicious festivities.

3. The waters of the rivers became crystal clear; the lakes were blooming with lotuses; the rows of forest trees laden with bunches of flowers were resounded with swarms of the sweetly humming bees and cooing of birds.

4 A pure, cool breeze wafting sweet fragrance blew delighting in its touch; the sacred fires maintained in the houses of the twice-borns (automatically) burst into flames.

5. With the exception of demons like Kaṁsa, the minds of all the creatures and those of gods became filled with delight. When the birthless (Lord Viṣṇu) was about to incarnate, kettle-drums were being sounded in the celestial region.

6. At that time Kinnaras and Gandharvas burst forth singing, Siddhas and Cāraṇas sang prayers; ladies of the Vidyādhara clan danced along with celestial damsels.

7. Overwhelmed with joy the gods and sages showered (heaps of) flowers; following the roaring of the seas, clouds gave forth a low rumbling sound.

8. At midnight when the darkness tormenting the people was thickening, Lord Viṣṇu, the Indweller of the hearts of all, manifested himself in his own complete divine form, like the full moon rising in the East, through Devakī who was like unto a goddess.

9-10. Vasudeva saw that wonderful child of lotus-like eyes, endowed with four arms, bearing a conch and wielding aloft a mace and a discus (and a lotus); having (on his chest) the Śrīvatsa mark (of curl of golden hair), with the Kaustubha gem (hanging from his neck but) beautified by his neck; clad in yellow silken garments, possessing the charming complexion of rain-bearing cloud; his profuse locks of hair bathed in the lustre of his crown and ear-rings studded with invaluable *vaidūrya*-gems (lapis lazuli); resplendent with his exquisite and valuable zone, armlets, bracelets and other ornaments.

11. With eyes blooming wide open with amazement, Vasudeva beheld Lord Hari (born as) his son. With his mind confused with rapture on that happy and auspicious occasion of Kṛṣṇa's incarnation, he (Vasudeva) was overcome with (lit. bathed in) delight, and gave ten thousand cows as gift to Brāhmaṇas.

12. Now realizing the child who illuminated the lying-in-chamber with his splendour, was Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Person, Vasudeva of pure heart, who, due to his awareness of Viṣṇu's prowess completely lost his fear, began to praise him with folded palms, and body bent low in humility, Oh scion of Bharata.

(Having first embraced the Lord as his son)

*Vasudeva said* :

13. How blessed I am that I have seen you directly —you the Supreme Person, transcendental to and distinct from *Prakṛti*, absolute wisdom and supreme bliss incarnate, and (as inner controller) the witness of all minds and intellects.

14. (As a matter of fact you never entered the womb of Devakī for) you are factually of such absolute nature as is

described above. Having evolved this universe consisting of three *guṇas* through your creative potency called Māyā, at the beginning of creation, you have not really entered into it (for the Lord is infinite and the universe is limited); you are, however, presumed to have entered it (as a *Puruṣa* and the omnipresent Inner Controller).

15. Just as these unmodified elementary principles (such as *mahat*, *Ahaṁkāra*) are in existence at the beginning of the creation, and are severally incapable of creation though endowed with different properties and powers, they give rise to the universe after combining with their evolutes.

16. Having come together (synthesizing) with their (sixteen) evolutes, they create the universe and appear to have entered into it; but due to their existence prior to the creation (as its cause), their (later) entry is an impossibility. (Similarly, the Lord existed before Devakī and his appearance to have entered her womb is not a reality).

17.* In this way, even though your revered self exists along with the objects which are cognisable through senses (the true nature of which is) inferrable through perception of sense-objects you are not perceived along with those objects, directly (as the senses can perceive only their specific objects and God is not such an object); (for you, being unconditioned and all-pervading, the distinction of being inside or outside is inapplicable to you. You are everything and the indwelling Soul of all, the self-abiding real essence. (Hence your entry in the womb of Devakī is not a reality).

* (1) VR. : Though you abide in all creatures like gods, men—the products of *guṇas*—you are not affected by their limitations. You are above modifications, essentially of unlimited knowledge and blissful nature. You are un-enveloped i.e. of unlimited knowledge. Being all-pervading and the cause of all the distinction of being 'in' and 'out' is not applicable to you. As you are the independent Inner Controller, *antaryāmin*, the limitations of the body do not affect you.

(2) SD. emphasizes that the direct vision of God is due to His grace and He is beyond the ken of senses.

(3) VT. : As you are always loving to your devotees, you have come to us as a son which is the highest reward (of our devotion).

18.* He who presumes real independent existence—as distinct from the Soul—in the case of objects perceived by him (or by the Soul) is an ignorant person. For when these objects (i.e. the world) are subjected to investigation, they are (found to be) of verbal nature and essentially unreal. He who acknowledges the unreality as a distinct reality is (certainly) a dullard.

19. Oh all-pervading Lord ! They say that the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe proceeds from you who are above all *guṇas*, (and hence) desireless (and performing no acts), and subject to no modification. As you are both Brahman and the Supreme Ruler, there is no contradiction in transcendence to modifications and the creation etc. of the universe. For though the activity is carried out by *guṇas*, it is ascribed to you as *guṇas* (ultimately depend on you only).

20. You who are of such a nature (as described above) verily assume, through your Māyā potency, pure white complexion (Brahmā form) full of the principle of *rajas* for the creation of these worlds, and a dark complexion (Rudra form) through *tamas* for the destruction of the universe.

21. Oh all-pervading Lord, the supreme Ruler of all ! (how gracious of you it is that though Your *avatāra* is an impossibility in the real sense of the term), You have incarnated yourself in my house (despite its being a prison-cell), with a desire to protect this world. You will annihilate the hordes led by millions of Asura chiefs passing under the name of Kṣatriyas.

22. Oh Lord of gods ! Hearing (the prediction) of Your birth in our house, this villainous fellow (Kaṁsa) has (cold-bloodedly) killed your elder brothers. Learning your incarnation directly through the reports of his servants, he will just now rush here with uplifted weapons."

* VJ. : In the absence of the support of Vedic texts, it is untenable to admit the conclusion of the ignorant that you are identical with the body or the senses simply because of Your presence in them. For the Supreme Man (Lord Viṣṇu) has accepted (or revealed) the super-human faultless Vedic texts which dispel all doubts.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

23. Now, seeing that this son of hers bore the characteristics of the supreme person (Lord Viṣṇu), Devakī who was (erstwhile) afraid of Kaṁsa, (now) smiled happily and began to pray him :

*Devakī said* :

24. (How can there be any danger to you) who are verily the Lord Viṣṇu himself, the Illuminator of the aggregate of intelligence, senses and other psycho-physical organisms: and who are that indescribable Reality whom the Vedas declare as the unmanifest primordial cause, the Supreme Brahman, pure consciousness transcending all *guṇas* and modifications, absolute existence attributeless, and devoid of activity.

25. When at the end of the period of two *parārdhas* (which terminates the life-time of Brahmā), by the velocity of time, the universe dissolves and all the gross elements (*Mahābhūtas*) are absorbed into their primordial subtle form (viz. *ahaṁkāra* which in its turn is absorbed into the principle called *mahat*) and the principle *mahat* is merged in the unmanifest (*pradhāna* which is absorbed in you), You alone remain behind (remaining cognisant that the *Pradhāna* lying merged in You is to be re-awakened) and hence you are designated as the Residue (*Śeṣa*) or the complete whole (*aśeṣa*).

26. The wise say that this mighty time as described above which begins with a *nimeṣa* (twinkling of the eye) and extends (through cycle of years) to the end of *dviparārdha* (Brahmā's life) and which controls the cyclic course of the universe, is your own sportful activity, Oh Director of the *Prakṛti* ! I seek your protection—You who are the Supreme Ruler and the abode of security.

27. A mortal, being apprehensive of the serpent (in the form) of death, and running about all the world (for security against death), failed to find a place free from fear. Today having attained to your lotus-like feet through an unexpected stroke of good luck (and through your grace), he reposes in peace and security. It is (now) Death that runs away from him.

28. Of such nature as You are, protect us (your devotees) who are afraid of the terrible son of Ugrasena; for you are the rescuer of your devotees (servants) from fear. Let not this divine form of yours which is worthy of being the object of meditation, be manifest to the gross physical eyes of human beings.

29. Let not that wicked Kaṁsa know of your birth from me, Oh Madhusūdana (slayer of the demon Madhu). Being naturally timid, I am terribly afraid of Kaṁsa, for your sake.

30. Oh soul of the universe ! May you withdraw this Superhuman form with four arms furnished with the superb splendour of conch, discus, mace and lotus.

31. That your Lordship, the Supreme Person who contains within yourself all this universe *in extenso* at the end of the cosmic night (during *Pralaya*), should get himself accommodated in my womb is certainly a wonderful imitation of the human (ways of the) world."

*The Lord said* :

32. "Oh chaste lady ! In your previous birth in the age of Svāyambhuva Manu, you were Pṛśni and this sinless Vasudeva your husband, was then a Prajāpati named Sutapas.

33. When both of you were directed by god Brahmā to create progeny, you subdued all your senses and performed a very austere penance.

34. Enduring in due course, all the inclemencies of the seasons such as rains, storms, solar rays, snow-fall and heat, you completely washed off the impurities of the mind by breath-control.

35. Subsisting on withered leaves and merely on air and actuated with the desire to obtain your cherished objects from me, you were determined to propitiate Me with a serene mind.

36. Thus rolled by twelve thousand divine years, while both of you, with your heart fixed on Me, were performing a very difficult and austere penance.

37-38. Being continuously contemplated upon in the heart with faith, devotion and asceticism, I was highly pleased with you and manifested myself before you in this very form with a desire to fulfil your cherished objects, Oh sinless one,

When I, the foremost bestower of boons, told you to ask Me for a boon, the boon for having a son like Me was sought by you.

39. Though both of you had not tasted the conjugal and other pleasures of ordinary sensual objects and were childless, you did not seek for Emancipation (from the world) as you were deluded by My divine Māyā.

40. When I disappeared from your view and you, having secured the boon of getting a son like Me and thus accomplishing your cherished desire, you indulged in enjoying sensual pleasures.

41. Finding that nobody else in this world is comparable to Me in goodness of nature, generosity and other virtues in this world, I Myself was born as your son and became known as *Pṛśni-garbha*.

42. And again of you both (as Aditi and Kaśyapa) I was born of Aditi from Kaśyapa and was famous as Upendra and also as Vāmana due to shortness of stature.

43. Now even in this third incarnation, I am verily born with that very form again of you both (who are former Aditi and Kaśyapa). In this way, my word has been kept, Oh pious lady.

44. I have revealed this form of Mine to you in order to remind you of my previous births (from you); otherwise the knowledge about my real being is not possible through the semblance of human form. (Now as desired by you, I shall assume the form of a human baby).

45. Thinking of Me constantly as your son as well as contemplating upon Me as Supreme Brahman and loving me affectionately, both of you will attain to the highest state in relation to Me.

45-A. (*Vṛndāvana edition adds*)

If you are still afraid of Kaṁsa, quickly take me to Gokula and bring (as substitute) My Māyā who has been born from (the womb of) Yaśodā."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

46. Having spoken thus, Hari became silent. With his Māyā power, the Lord immediately became an ordinary

human babe, while the parents were simply looking on (with wonder).

47. Thereupon, when Vasudeva, the son of Śūra desired to go out of the lying-in-chamber taking his son with him (and was about to start) as directed by the Lord, Yoga-Māyā, though (herself) birthless, was born of Nanda's wife.

48-49. By Yoga-Māyā the gate-keepers were deprived of all their consciousness and functioning of their senses and even the citizens were steeped in deep sleep; all the gates (of the palace prison) which were closed by huge doors secured with iron chains and bolts automatically flung open at the approach of Vasudeva carrying Kṛṣṇa (on his head) like darkness dispersing at the appearance of the Sun. The rain cloud showered with a gentle rumbling and the serpent Śesa (closely) followed him, warding off the rain-water with his hoods spread over his head (like an umbrella).

50. While Indra, the god of rains, continuously poured showers of rain (and even though) the river Yamunā (the presiding deity of which was Yamunā, the younger sister of Yama—the god of death) covered with foam created by waves set up by the velocity of the swiftly-moving deep flood and was full of hundreds of fearful whirlpools, afforded passage (to Vasudeva and Kṛṣṇa) as the Sea did to the Lord of Lakṣmī (Lord Śrī Rāma) formerly.

51. Arriving at Nanda's Vraja, Vasudeva found that all the cowherds were deeply buried in sleep. Placing his son on the bed of Yaśodā, taking up her daughter (in exchange), Vasudeva returned home (his palace-prison).

52. Placing the daughter on the bed of Devakī, Vasudeva put the iron fetters on his feet and remained confined as before.

53. And Yaśodā, Nanda's wife was vaguely conscious of having delivered a child, but she was so exhausted and had her memory (so much) clouded under delusion, that she did not discern the sex of the baby.

## CHAPTER FOUR

*Yoga-Māyā's Prophecy and Kaṁsa's Order to Slaughter all Children*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. (After the return of Vasudeva) all the gates of the outer and inner apartments became closed as before. Hearing the cry of the baby, the palace guards became wide-awake.

2. They, on their part, (promptly and) hastily approached Kaṁsa, the King of Bhojas, and reported (to him) Devakī's delivery of that (eighth) child which he was expecting anxiously.

3. Springing up hurriedly from the bed and bewildered at the thought that that (child) was his (veritable god of) death, he, with tottering steps and dishevelled hair, rushed hastily to (Devakī's) lying-in-room.

4. To her brother (Kaṁsa), the pious, divine, (yet) miserable lady piteously addressed. "This is your daughter-in-law, Oh blessed brother. She may be the eighth child (but) it is not proper that you should kill a female (child).

5. Dear Brother ! Impelled as you were by Destiny, a number of my children brilliant like fire, were killed by you. Be pleased to give (spare) this one daughter to me.

6. Oh mighty king ! Am I not your miserable younger sister who am bereaved of all my sons ? Unfortunate as I am, it behoves you, Oh dear brother, to spare this last child for me".

*Śrī Śuka said* :

7. (Although) he was thus implored by Devakī while hugging the child to her bosom and weeping piteously like a most helpless woman, the wicked fellow sternly rebuked her and snatched away the baby from her.

8. His affection (for the sister and niece) being uprooted (superseded) by his (vile) self-interest, he seized the new-born daughter of his sister by her feet and dashed her against the surface of a slab.

9. Flying off from (the grip of) of hands, she rose up to the sky and (stationing herself in the sky), the younger sister of Kṛṣṇa manifested herself as a goddess with eight mighty arms wielding weapons.

10. She was adorned with heavenly garlands, garments, pigments, jewelled ornaments and wielded (in her arms) a bow, a spear, an arrow, a shield, a sword, a conch, a discus and a mace.

11. She was being praised by Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Gandharvas, Apsaras (divine damsels), Kinnaras and serpents who offered her rich, sumptuous presents. She spoke :

12. "You dunce ! What have you gained by killing me ? Your destroyer, your adversary in the former birth, is born somewhere (in an unknown place). Do not unnecessarily kill helpless, innocent children."

13. Having warned him thus, the goddess (disappeared). The venerable goddess Māyā is known under many names and is worshipped in many shrines, bearing different names.

14. Kaṁsa was extremely flabbergasted to hear her pronouncement. He set Vasudeva and Devakī at liberty and apologised in humility :

15. "Alas ! My sister ! Oh my brother-in-law ! Like a cannibal preying on his own child, many a son of yours has been killed by me, a wicked sinner.

16. For being so, (a sinner) bereft of mercy, for disowning my friends and relatives, for being virtually dead though breathing (merely alive), I do not know to what infernal region I shall be taken as in the case of a slayer of Brāhmaṇas.

17. Not only mortals but even the celestials also speak untruth. Putting faith in them, I, a wicked sinner, killed my sister's children.

18. Oh high-souled ones ! Do not lament for your sons who reaped the fruit of their previous deeds. Creatures are at the mercy of the Providence. They do not live or are not together (at the same place) for ever.

19. Just as in this world earthen articles are created out of and (after destruction) become one with the earth, but the earth itself persists (unmodified), similarly in the process of

creation and destruction of physical bodies the Soul undergoes no modifications.

20. Misapprehension about the nature of the Soul arises in him who does not understand the Reality as it is. That leads to the notion of difference (contrary to the real nature of the Soul). Thus there is no end to *saṁsāra* and to the union and separation from the body (i.e. the cycle of births and deaths).

21. Inasmuch as every creature has inevitably and helplessly to reap the fruit of his actions, Oh blessed sister, do not grieve over (the death of) your sons, even though they were killed by me.

22. So long as a person does not cognize the real nature of his Self and identifies his body with the Soul, and (wrongly) regards himself as being killed or being the killer, that ignorant fellow is subject to the role of being the subject or object of suffering.

23. Saintly persons are compassionate to the afflicted and the poor. Please do forgive me for my wickedness." With these words and with his face overflowing with tears, he clasped the feet of his sister and her husband.

24. Being reassured by the words of the daughter of Devakī, Kaṁsa, as a testimony of his personal affection to them, released Vasudeva and Devakī from chains (prison).

25. Due to the (sincere) regrets and repentance of her brother, the wrath of Devakī was pacified, and she gave him leave (to go). Vasudeva smiled and spoke to him :

26. "Oh highly fortunate Kaṁsa ! It is exactly as you say. The notion of creatures that they are identical with the body is born of ignorance, and that is the cause of the difference in regarding this as one's own and that as another's.

27. Persons possessing differentiating outlook and sense of distinction and suffering from grief, joy, fear, malice, covetousness, delusion and pride do not perceive the self-existent Reality (God) who brings about the destruction of beings through their mutual action (against each other), caused by their passions."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

28. Thus sincerely addressed by kindly disposed Devakī and Vasudeva, Kaṁsa took leave of them and returned to his palace.

29. When the night was over, Kaṁsa summoned his ministers and reported to them everything that had been said by *Yoganidrā* (the trance—sleep of Lord Viṣṇu).

30. Hearing the narration of their master, the demons (sons of Diti), the (sworn) enemies of gods, who cherished deep anger against the celestials, but were not foresighted spoke to him.

31. "If this be the case, Oh Lord of Bhojas, we shall verily massacre today all children of ten days or less (dwelling) in cities, towns, cowherds' camps and (such) other places.

32. What can the gods do with all their endeavours. They are cowards on the battlefield. They live in perpetual terror of the twanging of your bow-string.

33. Being beaten on all sides with volleys of arrows discharged by you, they, being anxious to save their lives, deserted the battlefield and took to their heels.

34. Some gods in their wretched plight laid down their arms and stood with folded palms, while others with their loin-cloth untucked and hair on the head untied and dishevelled announced, "We are afraid."

35. You do not strike at those (enemies) who have forgotten their arms and missiles or have lost their chariots or are terror-stricken or are attending to something else or have turned away (from the battlefield) or have their bows broken or have given up fighting.

36. What can gods, the warriors in peace times and boastful outside the battlefield, do (to harm us)? Of what account is Hari who lies in concealment or Śiva who dwells in a forest? Why care for Indra of poor strength or Brahmā (always) absorbed in penance?

37. We, however, think that gods due to their (inborn) enmity, should not be ignored. Therefore, deploy us, your obedient servants to dig out and destroy even their roots.

38. Just as a disease in the body, if neglected, strikes deep roots and becomes impossible to be cured or the senses if

uncontrolled and ignored (become unmanageable), so the enemy, if ignored, grows in strength and cannot be dislodged.

39. Viṣṇu is the root (the main stay) of all gods. Where there is Viṣṇu, there abides the eternal righteousness (*dharma*). The roots of the *dharma* are the Vedas, cows, Brāhmaṇas, asceticism and sacrifices with donation of liberal gifts.

40. Therefore, Oh King, we shall kill by all (possible) means Brāhmaṇas, the reciters of the Vedas, the ascetics performing penance and those continually engaged in sacrificial acts, and cows yielding all the materials for sacrificial oblations.

41. Brāhmaṇas, cows, the Vedas, penance, truthfulness, control of senses, serenity of mind, faith, mercy, endurance and the sacrifices constitute the body of Hari.

42. For he is the Supreme Ruler of all gods, the enemy of Asuras, the indweller in the hearts of all. All divinities including Lord Śiva and the four-faced god Brahmā depend on him as their support (root). Hence extirpation (through persecution) of sages is really the only means of killing him."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

43. Having thus conferred with his wicked ministers, the evil-minded Kaṁsa who was enmeshed in the snare of Death, considered massacre of Brāhmaṇas as conducive to his good.

44. Having commissioned Dānavas who were naturally disposed to persecute others and who could assume any form at will, for harassing the good people in all directions, Kaṁsa entered his palace.

45. Constituted as they were by predominantly *rājasic* nature, and with their minds deluded by *tamas*, they started their campaign of hatred of the good as their death was imminent.

46. Serious violations of the great destroy one's span of life, prosperity, glory, righteousness, (attainment of) heavenly regions, and all other blessings.

## CHAPTER FIVE

*Celebration of Kṛṣṇa's Birth : Meeting of Nanda and Vasudeva*

*Śrī Śuka said :*

1-2. Delighted at the birth of a son, the noble-minded Nanda too took a bath, got purified and adorned himself. He sent for Brāhmaṇas well versed in astrology and made them recite the *Svastyayana* (prescribed benedictory Vedic hymns) and got the *jāta-karma* ceremony of his child, as well as the worship of his forebears (*pitṛs*)and gods duly performed according to precepts.

3. As a gift (on this joyous occasion), he presented to Brāhmaṇas two-hundred thousands of richly adorned cows, and seven mountain-like heaps[1] of sesamum seeds covered with streams (large quantities) of precious stones and gold-cloth.

4.* Some material things become purified by passage of time (e.g. the earth), some by ablution (e.g. our body), or washing (e.g. things covered with dirt), some by special rites (e.g. the foetus), some by penance (e.g. senses), some by sacrificial performance (e.g. Brāhmaṇas), some by charitable gifts (wealth), some by contentment (mind), while the soul is purified by (meditation and) knowledge of the Self.

5. Brāhmaṇas, Sūtas[2], Māgadhas and Vandins uttered auspicious blessings; musicians sang; drums and kettle-drums were frequently sounded.

6. All the entrances, enclosures, and interiors of the houses of *Vraja* were well-swept and properly besprinkled (with

1. VC. quotes the *Bhaviṣyottara Purāṇa* and states the best 'Sesamum mountain' consists of ten *droṇas*, medium of five, and the lowest of three *droṇas*.

* Examples in the bracket are supplied by ŚR.

2. Normally *sūtas* are the reciters of Purāṇas; Māgadhas are bards reciting the glories of royal dynasties; Vandins are clearheaded persons making observations suitable for the occasion.

*sūtāḥ paurāṇikāḥ proktā, Māgadhā vaṁśa-śaṁsakāḥ /*
*Vandinas tvamala-prajñāḥ praśtāva-sadṛśoktayaḥ//*

But VJ. states : *Sūtas* sing the eulogies composed by themselves, Māgadhas sing compositions of others, while Vandins read panygerics from books.

water). It (the *Vraja*) was decorated with flags and buntings of different colours, banners, wreaths, arches of (silken) raiments, and tender leaves.

7. The oxen, cows and heifers (grown up calves) were smeared with oil mixed with turmeric power. They were painted with various colours, and adorned with peacock feathers, wreaths, cloths and gold chains (round the neck).

8. Adorned with valuable garments, costly ornaments, coats and turbans, the cowherds came to visit (Nanda) with various kinds of presents in their hands.

9. On hearing the news of the birth of a son to Yaśodā, the cowherd women were delighted, and they beautified themselves with costly garments, ornaments and (the make-up of) collyrium etc.

10. The beauty of their lotus-like faces was enhanced with the decoration of saffron-paste like unto filaments heightening the beauty of a lotus. In spite of their heavy buttocks, they hastily went with presents (to Yaśodā) heaving their heavy breasts (while going).

11. Wearing ear-rings set with well-polished jewels, necklaces of gold-coins about their necks, and clad in wonderfully wrought garments of various colours the *gopa* damsels proceeded to the palace of Nanda showering on the way flowers dropped from the braids of their hair. They appeared (lit. shone) most beautiful with bangles round their wrists, their swaying ear-rings and dangling necklaces on heaving breasts.

12. Invoking blessings (of God) on the child, "May you protect the child for a long time"[1] they sprayed the (assembled) people with water mixed with oil and turmeric power and sang lustily. (Or : they sang in a high pitch the praise of the Unborn—Kṛṣṇa).

13. On the great festive occasion of the coming of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Infinite, the Supreme Lord of the universe, a variety of musical instruments were played on.

1. Or : May you protect us forever—VR and others.

This interpretation is obviously illogical and out of context with the sentence, "Invoking blessings on the child".

14. The merry cowherds joyously sprayed and besmeared one another with curds, milk, ghee and water and they threw (balls of) butter at each other.[1]

15-16* For the propitiation of Lord Viṣṇu and for the well-being of his son, the noble-minded Nanda presented to the cowherds garments, ornaments and wealth in the form of cows (or kine, gold and silver). The generous-hearted Nanda respectfully worshipped Sūtas, Māgadhas, Vandins and others who lived by their arts, skills or crafts (e.g. astrologers, dancers etc.), and conferred upon them their (respective) desired objects.

17. Welcomed by Nanda, the chief of cowherds, Rohiṇī, who was highly fortunate (as she was to be witness to the sportive activities of Lòrd Kṛṣṇa from his childhood) was adorned with very costly (heavenly-type) Lower garment and other clothes, garland and necklace and was moving about in Nanda's palace (particularly in that reception).

18. Thence forward the *Vraja* of Nanda became blessed with prosperity in every respect as it was turned into a pleasure garden for the sporting of goddess Lakṣmī due to its becoming the abode of Hari, Oh King.

19. Having instructed the cowherds to take care of and protect the Gokula, Nanda went to Mathurā to pay his annual tribute to Kaṁsa, Oh Parīkṣit (the best of Kurus).

20. Having learnt (from the public) that his brotherly Nanda had come and having (reliably) known that Nanda's (official) work of payment of tributes was over, Vasudeva repaired to his lodging place (the parking ground of wagons).

21. Seeing him (Vasudeva) come, he promptly sprang to his feet as a body (in an unconscious stage) does on the return of life (or consciousness). Being overjoyed and over-

1. Or : Thickly besmearing one another with butter, they tried to throw each other on (the slippery) ground.—VT.

* ŚR : The nobleminded Nanda presented to cowherds as also to Sūtas, Māgadhas, Vandins and others who lived by their skill in arts, crafts, etc., garments, ornaments, kine and wealth.

For the propitiation of Lord Viṣṇu and the well-being of the child, the generous-minded Nanda honoured others (visitors, guests etc.) by bestowing on them their desired objects.

whelmed with affection, he flung his arms round his dearest friend to embrace him.

22. Oh Protector of the People ! When Vasudeva was respectfully received, comfortably seated and was honoured with the enquiry about his health, he, with his mind deeply attached to both of his sons, courteously addressed Nanda as follows :

23. "Brother ! It is indeed fortunate that a darling child has been born to you who were childless till this advanced age and had lost hopes of getting an issue.

24. It is due to sheer good luck that you have met me today like one born again in this whirling cycle of Saṁsāra. For the sight of dear ones is very rare.

25. Oh dear friend ! The staying together of intimate friends (howsoever dear but) following varied professions, is not possible like unto the coming together of floating logs of wood (etc.) in a stream of water but which are swept away by the current.

26. Is the Gokula (Vṛndāvana) where you are now dwelling accompanied (lit. surrounded) by your friends and relatives favourable to the cattle ? Does it abound in plenty of water, grass and plants ? Is it free from disease and epidemics ?

27. Oh brother ! Does my son (Balarāma) who regards you to be his father and is dearly fondled by you and your wife, doing well along with his mother, in your *Vraja* ?

28. For, the threefold objective of human life (viz. *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*) is prescribed (as beneficial) insofar as they are shared with one's kith and kin. But if they suffer distress, that threefold purpose of life does not contribute to happiness."

*Nanda said* :

29. "Alas ! Many of your sons born of Devakī have been killed by Kaṁsa. And only the youngest daughter survived—even she flew to heaven.

30.* It is definite that people in this world have their end in the unseen (according to their destiny. When good

* VR : All people definitely find their end in the unseen (as destined along with happiness and misery). The destiny is the ultimate supreme controller. He who realises that pleasure and pain are always due to his destiny, is always equable and serene in prosperity and adversity.

fortune, blessing one with the pleasure of having sons etc., ceases to smile, one is bereaved of them). The destiny is supreme. (If one is separated from one's sons, the destiny reunites them). He who knows that the destiny is the reality about Ātman (and as such is the ever constant cause of pleasure and pain) does not get bewildered."

*Vasudeva said* :

31. "The annual tribute has been paid by you to the king, and we have seen (each other). You should not stay here any longer, for omens indicating calamities are seen at Gokula."

*Śri Śuka said* :

32. Thus advised by Vasudeva, Nanda and other cowherds, taking leave of him, mounted on carts drawn by bullocks and returned to Gokula.

## CHAPTER SIX

*Pūtanā emancipated*

*Śri Śuka said* :

1. On his way (back to Gokula), Nanda pondered that the words of Vasudeva might not be untrue. Being apprehensive of impending calamities, (mentally) he sought refuge in Lord Hari.

2. Deputed by Kaṁsa, the terrible, infant-killer Pūtan moved about, killing babes and infants in cities, towns, cowherd-settlements (on her way).

3. Wherever, people, while attending to their duties, do not listen to (recite etc.) the names and deeds of the Lord of Sātvatas (Kṛṣṇa) which are capable of annihilating demons, there and there only, ogresses (and other evil spirits) prevail.

4. One day, that Pūtanā who was capable of coursing through the sky, flew (through the sky) to the Gokula ruled by Nanda. Assuming the form of a young beautiful woman

through her witchcraft, she entered the Gokula as the wantonness was capable of assuming any guise, and moving into any house she pleased.

5-6. On seeing that beautiful damsel the braids of whose hair were adorned with jasmine flowers (interwoven therein), whose slender waist was (as if) crushed between her big buttocks and heavy breasts, who was clad in rich garments, whose face was beautified with the locks of hair lustrous with the radiance of the brilliant swaying ear-rings, who with her charming smiles and sidelong glances captivated the hearts of the inhabitants of Vraja (who hence failed to extern her), and whom, due to her wearing a blooming lotus in hand, the Gopa women thought to be goddess Lakṣmī incarnate, who had come to see her Lord (and they kept silent in awe and respect, instead of barring her entrance).

7. Pūtanā, that infant-killer evil spirit, roving in search for babies, came by chance to the house of Nanda, and saw the child Kṛṣṇa who was the exterminator of the wicked, but was lying in bed with his immeasurable innate glory veiled, like fire covered under ashes.

8. Recognizing her to be the evil spirit which kills infants, the Lord of the mobile and immobile creation lay quiet with his eyes closed[1]. And she placed the Infinite Lord, her very death, on her lap, as a stupid person would do to a sleeping serpent, mistaking it for a rope.

8A. Even though he was the Supreme Ruler of the universe the Lord, playing the part of a child, spoke nothing. But the fiendess was unaware that he was the lord Hari who by his very nature knows directly all the activities of the world.

9. Finding suddenly within their house that superb accomplished lady behaving (externally) most affectionately and in a charming way, even though her heart was sharp (cruel like sword encased in a charming scabbard, both the mothers (Yaśodā and Rohiṇī) were stupefied with her effulgence and stood agazing (instead of preventing her).

10. The terrible demoness placed the child Kṛṣṇa on her lap and suckled him at her breast full of indigestible virulent

1. VJ.'s text interperses one verse here.

poison. Thereupon, with indignation, the Lord squeezed hard her breast with his hands and sucked it along with her life.

11. Being crushed in all her vital parts, she cried out "Let me go, enough of it, leave me". With her body drenched in perspiration and with her hands and feet thrown in convulsions and with distended eyes, she wailed loudly.

12. By her extremely loud and deep cry, the earth along with the mountains, and the heavens along with the planets, were shaken. The netherworld and all the cardinal points were reverberated with the Sound. People being afraid of the discharge of Vajra, fell down on the ground.

13. Oh King, the demoness who, being excruciatingly afflicted at the breast, thus fell dead, reverting to her original form with her mouth agape and her hair, hands and feet stretched near the cowpen even as Vṛtra fell when struck down with *Vajra* (thunderbolt).

14. Even while it fell, her (giant) body crushed to powder trees within an area of twelve miles. It was the most astonishing sight, Oh king of kings.

15-17. The cowherds—men and women—whose hearts, ears and heads were already rent asunder with the terrible roars and yells of the demoness, were struck with terror to see her fearful body with a mouth raged with a terrible set of tusks long like the poles of ploughs, with nostrils resembling mountain caverns; breasts huge like (a pair of hillocks, her reddish hair terribly dishevelled, her eyes deep like dark wells, her buttock terrifically big like sand dunes, her arms, legs and thighs resembling dams (around) her belly looking like a dried up, waterless pool.

18. Seeing the child playing fearlessly on her bosom, the cowherd-women, in their bewilderment, quickly came to him and picked him up.

19. They, also with Yaśodā and Rohiṇī ensured the (future) safety of the child on all sides, against evil spirits (and such other mishaps) by performing the ceremony of waving of the cow's tail round the child and other rites.

20. They bathed the child with the urine of a cow and besmeared it with dust raised by her hoofs. And by applying

cowdungs to twelve (different) parts of his body[1] pronouncing simultaneously twelve (different) names of the Lord, they ensured his safety (by this spiritual talisman).

21. (The *Gopa* women, being bewildered, forgot that they have to get themselves so consecrated before applying the talisman to the child. When they recovered....)

They performed the *ācamana* (sipping of water uttering the names of God for self-purification), made the *bija-nyāsa* (assignment of the various parts of the body to deities accompanied with the uttering of some 'seed-letters' and corresponding gesticulations) first on both of their hands and parts of their body, and then followed the same procedure of the 'placement of seed-letters' on the body of the child (as follows :).

(The Gopa women said)

22. "May Aja (the birthless Lord) protect your feet! May Maṇiman[2] (the Indweller of the *jīva.*) guard your knees;

1. VB. enumerates the parts of the body to be so daubed with cowdung, as follows :

*Lalāṭam bāhumūle ca hṛdayam nābhi-pārśvakam /*
*kaṇṭhaḥ skandhau kaṭir mūrdhā stanau ceti vidur budhāḥ //*

Forehead, arms, chest, navel, throat, shoulders, waist, head and the nipples on the chest. And names of god Viṣṇu to be uttered are the first twelve names out of the twenty-four names uttered at the beginning of *Sandhyā vandana.*

VT. quotes from the *Padma Purāṇa* the procedure which is as follows : The particular aspect of the Lord is visualized as consecrating and abiding in that particular part of the body.

| *Part of the body to be daubed.* | *Name of the Lord to be uttered at this time* |
|---|---|
| Forehead | Keśava |
| Abdomen (but KD. : Navel) | Nārāyāṇa |
| Chest | Mādhava |
| Throat | Govinda |
| Right side (but KD. · right arm-pit) | Viṣṇu |
| Right arm | Madhusūdana |
| Neck (but KD. : right ear-bottom) | Trivikrama |
| Left side (but KD. : Left arm-pit) | Vāmana |
| Left arm | Śrīdhara |
| Neck (but KD. : Left ear bottom) | Hṛṣīkeśa |
| Back | Padmanābha |
| Waist (but KD. : near the neck) | Dāmodara |

2. v.l. *maṇiman*—the wearer of the Kaustubha gem—KD.

Yajña, your thighs; Acyuta, your loins; Hayagrīva (horse-necked Lord), your abdomen; Keśava, your heart; Īśa (the Supreme Ruler), your bosom; Ina (The Lord), your throat; Viṣṇu, your arms; Urukrama, your mouth; and Īśvara (the Supreme Lord), your head.

23. May the wielder of (Sudarśana) discus protect you at the front, and the Bearer of the (Kaumodakī) mace, at the back; May the slayer of Madhu and Ajana (the birthless Lord) each bearing a bow and a sword, protect you on both the sides; May *Urugāya* (the Lord sung by many) bearing the conch (Pāñcajanya), at the four corners (points intervening between quarters); Upendra (Vāmana), overhead; Tārkṣya, on the ground and the Spreme Man wielding a plough, on all sides.

24. May Hṛṣīkeśa protect your senses; Nārāyaṇa, your vital breaths; the Lord of Śvetadvīpa, your heart (the seat of intellect); the Lord of Yoga, your mind.

25. May the son of Pṛśni protect Your understanding; the Supreme Lord, Your *ahaṁkāra* (ego); may Govinda protect You while You are playing; Mādhava, while sleeping.

26. May Vaikuṇṭha guard You while walking; the Lord of Śrī, while sitting. The enjoyer of sacrifices, the terror to all evil spirits, while (You are) eating.

27-29. (All evil spirits like) *Dākinī, Yātudhāni, Kūṣmāṇḍas*, the wicked spirits troubling young infants, *Bhūtas, Pretas, Piśācas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas* and *Vināyakas, Koṭarā, Revatī, Jyeṣṭhā, Pūtanā, Mātṛkās* and others; *Unmādas* (spirits causing insanity,) and *Apasmāras* which trouble the body, senses and vital breaths; the evil spirits that frighten in dreams, the great calamitous portents, and those wicked spirits that seize the old and the young all these which are terrified at the mention of Viṣṇu's name—may all these wicked spirits be destroyed."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

30. When the safety of the child was secured in this way (by performing the above-mentioned rites) by the Gopa women, bound to him with ties of affection, the mother suckled him and put him to bed.

31. In the meanwhile, Nanda and other Gopas (cowherds) reached Vraja from Mathurā. They became extremely astonished to see the (enormous) body of Pūtanā.

32. (They said to each other) "How wonderful! Certainly a veritable seer or a master of Yoga (in his previous incarnation) must have been born (in the form of Vasudeva). For that very calamity has been seen by us as was predicted by Vasudeva.

33. (Then) the inhabitants of Vraja hacked down that (Pūtanā's) body with axes and threw the pieces at a distance and burnt it limb by limb on pyres of logs of wood.

34. There arose (a column of) smoke fragrant like that of *aguru* sandle wood, out of that burning body, the sins of which were instantaneously annihilated, the moment Kṛṣṇa sucked (the life out of) it.

35. (How wonderful!) Pūtanā, the blood-sucking demoness, the infant-killer in this world attained to *Mokṣa* by giving suck to him, despite her intention of killing him.

36. How much more would they who dedicate with faith and devotion their most beloved objects to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, attain to *Mokṣa* as did his deeply attached mothers.[1]

37-38. When the Lord traversed Pūtanā's body with his feet which are enshrined in the hearts of his devotees, and are adorable to those (gods like Śiva and Brahmā) who are themselves worshipped by people, and sucked her breast, she, in spite of her being a demoness, attained to heaven, the destination (after death) of his mothers. What more need be said of those cows and mothers (Gopa women) the milk from whose breasts and udders was sucked (so fondly) by Kṛṣṇa? They must definitely attain to his abode.

1. ŚR. explains the plural form 'mothers' when Kṛṣṇa had actually two mothers—Yaśodā and Rohinī—by referring to Ch. 13 *infra* in which Kṛṣna is said to have assumed the forms of cowherd boys and calves when god Brahmā stole them away for one year and Kṛṣna in these forms was sucked by the *Gopa* women (the mothers of his abducted companions) and by cows (of those stolen calves). Thus those innumerable Gopa-women and cows became *ipso facto* his mothers.

39. For the glorious Lord, the son of Devakī, the dispenser of Final Emancipation and all other blessings, drank to his heart's content the milk flowing (out of their breasts) through maternal affection.

40. They who have incessantly looked upon (and thus meditated upon) him as their own son, shall never revert to *Saṁsāra*, the cause of which is ignorance.

41. Having smelt the fragrance of the smoke issuing from the funeral pyre (of Pūtanā), the inhabitants of Vraja (who were then away from home) returned to Vraja enquiring, "What it is this (fragrance) due to ? Whence is it coming ?"

42. Hearing from the cowherds the account of the arrival of Pūtanā etc., her death and the safety of the child, they were extremely wonderstruck.

43. Taking up the child (in his arms) as if he had returned from the jaws of death, the noble-minded Nanda smelt him on the crown of his head, and was overwhelmed with joy, Oh best of Kurus.

44. A man who will listen with faith this wonderful account of the liberation of Pūtanā, a sportive achievement of Lord Kṛṣṇa in his childhood, will develop love and devotion to Govinda.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

*Destruction of the Cart and Tṛṇāvarta*

*Śri Śuka said* :

*0.A In this way, achieving a number of feats (like the liberation of Pūtanā, by way of sportive activities as a child) which brought joy and happiness to Gopas and their wives, Viṣṇu, the exterminator of the wicked, grew up in the house of Nanda.

*0.B Thus (as narrated in the previous chapters) grew up in Nanda's house Kṛṣṇa (Viṣṇu), the destroyer of the wick-

** The Vṛndāvana edition includes the above verses from the texts of VR. and VJ.

ed people, giving delight day and night to the cowherds and their wives.

*The King (Parikṣit) urged* :

1. whatever (sportive) acts the glorious Lord Hari, the Supreme Ruler, does in whatever incarnation (like the Fish, the Tortoise etc. the accounts of which are narrated by you) they are pleasing to the ear and fascinating to our minds, Oh Master.

2. May it please you to favour us by narrating that very fascinating account (of Lord Hari's deeds), by listening to which (the feeling of) despondency and the various cravings (which generate it) fade away (leaving no trace behind), the mind gets purified in a short time, and devotion unto Lord Hari and friendly feelings towards his votaries are engendered.

3. Do you describe to us any other marvellous deed of Kṛṣṇa as a child who, after his descent in the human (form and) world, enacted (imitated) the ways of human beings.

3A. (VJ.'s text and Vṛndāvana edition)

Oh Master ! You are gracious unto us. So out of mercy towards me, be pleased to describe in details (Kṛṣṇa's sportive acts in childhood) which (completely) annihilate all sins, Oh past-master in Dharma !

*Śrī Śuka said* :

4. One day (at the end of the third month), when the constellation (Rohiṇī) that presided at the birth of Kṛṣṇa was in ascendance, and coincided with the ceremonial festive ablution to celebrate the infant's (Kṛṣṇa's) turning in the bed was to take place, the chaste lady Yaśodā performed the rite of auspicious bathing of the child in the assemblage of Gopa women (who visited her house for this occasion), while musical instruments were played, songs were sung and benedictory *Mantras* were being chanted (by Brāhmaṇas).

5. When the infant's bath and toilet were over, and Brāhmaṇas who were duly honoured with liberal gifts of (sumptuous) food, garments, garlands and cows of their choice, pronounced the auspicious benediction (with Vedic *Mantras*), Yośodā (the generous wife of liberal Nanda) seeing her child's

eyes closing in sleep, gently put him to bed (in a cradle under a cart).

6. With her mind full of enthusiasm on the festive occasion of Kṛṣṇa's turning in bed, the noble-minded lady, who was busy in receiving with honour the inhabitants of Vraja who came to (congratulate her) on that occasion, did not hear the crying of her child who, wishing to suck his mother, kicked up his tiny feet.

7. Being hit by the small feet, delicate like tender shoots of the baby that was lying beneath, the cart was overturned with its upside down, and all the pots of bell-metal containing various liquid delicacies (and other sweets) were crushed and the wheels, the axle tree were overturned and its yoke shattered.

8. Noticing it (the overturned position of the cart) Yaśodā and other women of Vraja who assembled there for the festive occasion (of Kṛṣṇa's turning in the bed) and Nanda and other cowherds as well, were perplexed at that marvellous sight and wondered, "How this cart could automatically be overturned ?"

8A. (VR. and VJ.'s text and VN Edn.)

Speaking thus and arguing about its cause in a perplexed manner, the people of Vraja surrounded the cart in a distressed mood, as it were.

9. Childern (playing nearby) told the Gopas and their wives whose minds were confused and uncertain (about the cause of overturning of the cart)—

"There is absolutely no doubt that it was upturned with the foot (kick) by this (Kṛṣṇa) while crying".

10. But the Gopas disbelieved it as mere prattle of children, as they did not know the immeasurable might of that baby.

11. Taking up her son, Yaśodā who suspected the trouble of evil spirits, made Brāhmaṇas to recite the benedictory Vedic hymns (to drive out the spirits), and to bless the child, and gave him suck.

12. Brāhmaṇas offered oblations to fire (to propitiate the presiding deities of planets).[1] When powerful *Gopas* assembled (the parts of) the cart as before along with the metal pots

1. Or : the offerings of *bali* (cooked rice) were distributed to eight irections—ŚR.

of dairy products etc., they worshipped it with curds, unbroken rice-grains, Kuśa grass and water[1] (as that was the symbol of their calling and the abode of Lakṣmī).

13. "The benedictions uttered by those who are truthful by nature and completely free from jealousy, falsehood, hypocrisy, intolerance, violence and pride, never become fruitless."

14-15. With this conviction, the cowherd Nanda took up the child and got it sprinkled with water sanctified with sacred *mantras* from the *Sāma*, *Ṛg* and *Yajur*-Vedas, by the best of Brāhmaṇas. Making the Brāhmaṇas pronounce the prescribed benedictory hymns (*Svastyayana*) and offering oblations to fire, Nanda with a serene mind, gave them a heavy feast (of rich, delicious articles of food).

16. For the all-round prosperity of the child, Nanda donated to them cows possessing all good (and auspicious) qualities, adorned them with cloth, garlands and necklaces of gold coins. And Brāhmaṇas, on their part, pronounced blessings to the child.

17. It is obvious that whatever benedictions are pronounced by Brāhmaṇas who are well-versed in Vedas and devoted to God shall never turn out to be fruitless.

18. On one day, the pious lady seated the child in her lap and was fondling him. But (suddenly) she was not able to bear the weight of the Baby, as if it was heavy like a mountain peak.

19. The cowherdess being oppressed with the burden (of the child), was astonished and placed him on the ground. She contemplated on the Supreme Lord not knowing that the whole universe is contained in his body and set about her work.

20. A demon called Tṛṇāvarta in the service of Kaṁsa was specially detailed and deputed (to kill Kṛṣṇa). Assuming the form of a whirl-wind, he carried away the child that was sitting.

21. He enveloped the whole of Gokula with a cloud of dust and blinded the eyes (of the inhabitants). He made the quarters and intermediate points tremble with his extremely terrible roar.

1. Or : with unbroken rice mixed with curds and sprinkling water with Kuśa grass (VT.)

22. For an hour or so the whole of Gokula was covered with (a cloud of) dust and darkness. Yaśodā could not see her son at the place where she kept him.

23. Being assailed by sand particles wafted by Tṛṇāvarta, nobody could see himself or another person in that blinding confusion.

24. Thus not being able to find the trace of her son in the heavy downpour of dust caused by the whirlwind of vehement velocity, the helpless mother (Yaśodā), brooding over him, tenderly began to bewail in the most pitiable manner, and dropped down to the ground like unto a cow bereaved of her calf.

25. When the vehemence of the stormy wind and of the dust-shower abated, the Gopīs (cowherd-women) heard the lamentations of Yaśodā. Not finding Nanda's son there, they were extremely tormented at heart, and broke out crying with their faces flooded with tears.

26. Having assumed the form of a whirlwind, Tṛṇāvarta carried away Kṛṣṇa to the skies. But in consequence of his having been compelled to bear the (unbearably) stupendous weight of Kṛṣṇa, he could not proceed further (beyond a certain height) and his velocity abated (to a stand-still).

27. Due to his extraordinary weight, the Asura thought him to be a mountain. As he was tightly gripped at the throat by him, he could not disengage himself from that wonderful (superhuman) child.

28. Being tightly clasped at the throat with extraordinary pressure, he was rendered motionless. His eyes came out of their sockets. With an indistinct groan he fell dead on the ground at Vraja, with the child dangling from his neck.

29. The bewailing women who assembled there saw the terrible demon falling from the sky on a rock, getting all his limbs shattered like the city (Tripura) cleft by the arrow of Rudra.

30. Astonished to see Kṛṣṇa dangling on the chest of the demon, they picked him up and restored him to his mother. Finding him safe and sound in body though carried away through the sky by the demon, and getting him back unscath-

ed from the jaws of death, Gopīs and Gopas headed by Nanda were verily filled with rapturous delight.

31. "Oh ! How miraculous ! This child, carried by the demon, and (practically) brought to its end (death), has come back safe ! While the blood-thirsty wicked (demon) was killed under the weight of his own sins, and a pious soul is saved from fear due to his even-ness of attitude (towards all).

32. Oh ! What austere penance, what adoration to Lord Viṣṇu, what charitable acts in public interest (like building of temples or tanks), what sacrificial performances, what deeds benevolent to living beings have been done by us that (by virtue of which) the child which was as good as dead, has been fortunately restored to us, bringing delight to us, his kinsfolk."

33. Amazed at the frequent recurrence of such miracles in that big forest (Gokula), Nanda highly esteemed the (parting) words of Vasudeva.

34. One day the beautiful lady (Yaśodā) placed the child on her lap, and being overcome with motherly affection made him suck her breast overflowing with milk.

35-36. When his sucking was almost over, she was caressing his face which was beaming with graceful smile. And Lo ! Oh King ! When he yawned she saw the following in his mouth :

The sky, the firmament above and the earth below, host of luminaries, the cardinal points, the Sun, the Moon, the fire-god, the wind-god, oceans, continents, mountains and their daughters (i.e. rivers), forests and the mobile and immobile creation.

37. Perceiving suddenly the whole of the universe (in his mouth) she was seized with tremor. The lady with eyes resembling those of fawns, closed her eyes, and stayed greatly astonished.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

*Kṛṣṇa's Sports—Display of Viśvarūpa*

*Śrī Śuka continued* :

1. At the request of Vasudeva, Garga, the family priest of Yadus, noted for rigid asceticism, visited Nanda's Vraja, Oh king.

2. He (Nanda) was highly pleased to see Garga. He stood up to show respect to him and folded his palms. He worshipped him, lying prostrate before him, regarded him to be Lord Viṣṇu.

3. When the sage was properly received and comfortably seated, Nanda, pleasing him with sweet words, asked, "Oh Brāhmaṇa, what service should I render to you who are self-accomplished (and want nothing).

4. Oh venerable sage ! Visits of great people like you contribute to the supreme good to persons who are attached to their households and are distressed in their minds. They never turn out to the contrary.

5. You have directly compiled a treatise on the science of astrology (lit. the movements of luminaries) which is beyond the range of senses. It is by that that a man knows his past and future.

6. You are foremost among the knowers of the Vedas. You should, therefore, perform the purificatory rites of these two boys; for a Brāhmaṇa is the preceptor of all people, by his very birth."

*Garga said* :

7. "I am the family priest of the Yadus and I am known over the world as such. If I were to consecrate your son with religious rites, they will regard him as the son of Devakī.

8-9. Kaṁsa is wicked by nature. The friendship between you and Vasudeva (is also well known). Kaṁsa has heard the words of Devakī's daughter that the eighth born (womb) of Devakī cannot be a female. If taking into account all these, he (Kaṁsa) gets suspicious, and if he were to kill (your son), it will be our blunder."

*Nanda replied* :

10. "Please perform the purificatory rites proper for members of the twice-born castes, invoking heavenly blessings with benedictory hymns. Please do so secretly at Gokula, without being noticed even by my own people."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

11. Thus requested (by Nanda), the Brāhmaṇa who himself was desirous of it performed the naming ceremony of the two boys (the sons of Rohiṇī and Yaśodā) secretly, remaining himself unnoticed.

*Garga said* :

12. "This son of Rohiṇī will be called Rāma as he will delight his friends with his amiable excellent qualities, and he will be known as *Bala* due to his superiority in strength. They will call him Saṅkarṣaṇa due to his capacity to draw together and unite dissenting Yadus (Garga does not want to disclose the transfer of Balarāma from the womb of Devakī to Rohiṇī due to which he was really called Saṅkarṣaṇa).

13. As to this (second son), he assumed human forms in every Yuga with three different complexions, viz., white, red and yellow for each, successively. Now he has assumed the dark complexion. (Hence he will be known as Kṛṣṇa).

14. Formerly, this son of yours was sometime born in the house of Vasudeva. Hence the wise (knowers of this fact) will designate him as Vāsudeva, the glorious.

15. Numerous are the names and forms of this son of yours suitable to excellent qualities and marvellous deeds. I know them (all), but not the common people.

16. This delight of Gopas and Gokula (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) will bring prosperity to you all, and you will easily surmount all calamities with his help.

17. In times of yore, while anarchy prevailed, he protected pious people who were harassed by rogues and robbers, and when strengthened by him, they (righteous people) vanquished the miscreants.

18. Just as those who side with Viṣṇu are not vanquished

by Asuras, those fortunate persons who (passionately) love him are not overpowered by enemies.

19. Therefore, Oh Nanda, this son of yours is a compeer of Lord Nārāyaṇa[1] in excellent qualities, splendour, glory and prowess. Therefore, please take care of him with very minute attention."

20. When Garga returned home after instructing Nanda thus (or addressing Lord Kṛṣṇa), Nanda was so highly delighted that he considered himself blessed with all well-beings.

21. In a short while, Rāma and Keśava began to creep on their hands and knees and sportfully went round Gokula.

22. While they crawled speedily even in the moist places of Vraja, dragging the pair of their legs (behind them), there arose a sweet tinkling sound of the tiny bells of their girdles and anklets. Their minds being delighted with the jingling sound, they followed the passers-by (a few steps) only to return to their mothers, as if in bewilderment and fright.

23. Their two mothers with their breasts spontaneously overflowing with milk due to motherly affection, embraced in their arms their sons who looked charming with their bodies besmeared with mud. They enjoyed ecstatic delight while gazing at their (sons') countenances beaming with bewitching smiles and tiny tender teeth when they were sucking the breasts.

24. When they attained to the age when the sports of boys become attractive to women to see, the damsels of Vraja witnessed how both of them, holding the tails of calves were dragged behind them hither and thither. Forgetting their household duties, they burst out laughing and were transported with joy.

25. When their mothers found it impossible to restrain their extremely active and playful sons from horned beasts, fire, animals of sharp teeth, sharp lethal weapons, water, (carnivorous, cruel) birds and thorns or even to attend to their household duties, they experienced a great mental (strain of) distraction.[2]

26. After a short time, Oh royal sage, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa

1. To whom Nārāyaṇa bears resemblance by his attributes—JG.
2. ŚR. regards this as the highest point of their domestic happiness.

began to move about easily on feet, in Gokul, without rubbing their knees (against the floor).

27. Then, in course of time, the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa accompanied by Balarāma began to play with boys of his own age, enhancing the joys of the women of Vraja.

28. Observing the charming boyish pranks of Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd-women came in a body (to his house) and actually spoke (complained) as follows within the hearing of his mother.

29. "Sometimes he untethers the calves untimely (before the milking time of cows allowing the calves to drink up all the milk). If scolded, he (derisively) laughs. Inventing novel ways of stealing, he drinks up the sweet and tasty curds and milk stolen by him. Sometimes he distributes it to the monkeys. If the monkey does not partake of it, he smashes the jar (or milk or curds). If he gets no material (to eat), he gets angry with the infants (people in the) house and goes away setting the infants (in the house) crying.

30. If the jar (of milk, curds or butter) is (kept hanging) beyond the reach of his hands, he constructs contrivance with the help of wooden seats and mortars. Knowing the contents of the pots suspended in slings, he strikes holes into the pots. In a dark room he uses like a lamp his own person, decorated profusely with jewels—he does all this at a time when the Gopa women have their minds fully engrossed in performing their household duties.

31. In this way, he commits acts of nuisance such as passing urine and leaving excretions in our cleansed houses. Having perpetrated such mischiefs and using all devices of stealing, he sits near you like an innocent boy of good behaviour".

Even though such complaints were lodged by women who gazed at his beautiful face with terrified eyes, Yaśodā full of smiles did not feel inclined to chastise him.

32. On one occasion, while cowherd-boys headed by Balarāma were playing, they complained to the mother (Yaśodā) that Kṛṣṇa had eaten earth.

33. Thereupon, Yaśodā who was anxious about his well-being and health), caught Kṛṣṇa by his hand and rebuking him, while his eyes assumed bewildering look (as if) through fear, she spoke :

34. 'You naughty boy ! Why did you eat earth secretly ? These your playmates tell me and this your elder brother also says the same.'

35. 'No mother, I did not eat earth. All these are liars. If (you still think that) they tell the truth, you look into my mouth personally.'

36. 'If that be the case, open your mouth.' Thus ordered, the glorious Lord Hari of unlimited supreme powers, and who, out of sport, had assumed the form of a human child, opened his mouth.

37-38. She (Yaśodā) beheld therein the universe consisting of mobiles and immobiles, the ethereal dome, the cardinal points, the sphere of the earth along with the mountains, continents and oceans, the wind, the fire (of lightning), the moon, the stars, the (whole of the) planetary system, (elements like) water, fire, wind and the sky, (the presiding deities of) the senses and the mind, subtle elements and the three *guṇas*.

39. Seeing in the body, nay in the gaping mouth of her child, this marvellous universe consisting of a variety of organisms produced by (factors like Souls, Time, Nature, Destiny and Mind as well as the whole of Vraja including herself, she was seized with terror.

40. (She bemused) "Is this a dream or an illusion created by the Lord ? Or is it a fantasy—a delusion of my own mind? Or is it the innate divine power of this very child of mine ?

41. Hence I bow down to the feet of the Supreme Lord, which are extremely difficult to comprehend and the real nature of which cannot be grasped easily by the intellect, mind, deeds and words; which are the basis of the universe and through the instrumentality of which and from out of which the universe is manifested.

42. He (that Supreme Lord) is my refuge by whose deluding potency (Māyā) arise perverse notions such as 'I am (Yaśodā)', 'This is my husband', 'This (Kṛṣṇa) is my son', 'I am that chaste lady who protect the whole property of Nanda (the Lord of Vraja)', 'All the cowherds—men and women along with the wealth of cattle—are mine'."

43. The Omnipotent Supreme Lord cast over the Gopa-lady who had thus realized the truth, his deluding *Vaiṣṇava*

(divine) charm which filled her with maternal affection for (her) son.

44. Instantly the Gopa-lady lost her memory (regarding the real nature of the Lord). She placed her son on her lap. Her heart overflowed with intense affection as before.

45. She began to look upon Hari as her own son—Hari whose glory is being sung by the three Vedas, Upaniṣads, Sāṅkhya and Yoga systems and by Sātvatas (or votaries of the Lord).

*The King said* :

46. Oh Brāhmaṇa Sage ! What highly meritorious act did Nanda perform so as to deserve such great fortune ? What did the highly fortunate Yośodā do that Lord Hari sucked her breasts ?

47. While the (real) parents of Kṛṣṇa could not witness the childly sports of Kṛṣṇa which wipe out the sins of the world and which are still extolled by the wise and learned people.

*Śuka replied* :

48. When Droṇa, the foremost of Vasus, along with his wife Dharā was intent upon executing the orders of god Brahmā, he requested that divinity.

49. "When we are born on the earth, may we entertain the highest devotion to Hari, the Supreme God, and the Lord of the universe—devotion through which a person easily and certainly overcomes evil destiny in this world."

50. 'Let it be so', replied the glorious god (granting his prayer). The illustrious Droṇa was born in Vraja and became well-known as Nanda. And the above-mentioned Dharā (his wife) became 'Yaśodā'.

51. Hence, out of all Gopa men and women, that couple entertained the most intense and passionate devotion to the glorious Lord Viṣṇu (Janārdana) who became their son, Oh descendant of Bharata.

52. In order to carry out (and fulfil) Brahmā's boon (to them), the Omnipresent Lord Kṛṣṇa along with Balarāma lived at Vraja and brought delight to them all, by his sportive activities.

## CHAPTER NINE

*Grace upon the Gopī (Yaśodā)*

*(Kṛṣṇa tied to the mortar)*

*Śri Śuka continued :*

1. One day, when the female servants were directed to do some other work, Yaśodā, the wife of Nanda, began to churn the curds personally.

2. At the time of churning the curds, she recalled whatever acts of her child were sung there in Vraja and she herself sang them.

3. Wearing round her big waist (loins) a silk garment fastened with a zone, and with her pair of shaking breasts that were overflowing with milk from maternal affection for her son, with her ear-rings set in motion as well as her bangles moving about her forearms, fatigued with pulling the churning rope to and fro and her face bedewed with drops of perspiration, the handsome lady went on churning while jasmine flowers continued to drop from the braids of her hair.

4. Approaching his mother who was engaged in churning (the curds), Śrī Hari, desiring to suck her, caught hold of the churning rod, and awakening her maternal affection for him (by is gestures etc.), he stopped her churning.

5. On his climbing up to her lap, she began to suckle him at her bosom overflowing with milk, through affection, and to gaze at his countenance which was beaming with smiles. But when the milk placed on the oven (for boiling) was about to overflow, she went in haste, leaving him alone, still unsatisfied.

6. Flared up with indignation, he bit his quivering ruddy lips with his teeth and smashed the pot for churning curds with a piece of stone (used for grinding condiments etc. on a slab of stone). Shedding false tears, he entered the interior of the house and began to eat butter clandestinely.

7. After getting down the (pot of) well-boiled milk, the Gopa-lady re-entered (the churning-room) only to find that pot of curds smashed. Knowing that to be the act of her son and failing to see him there, she just laughed (it away).

8. Observing that her son was standing firmly on the base of an overturned mortar, giving freely to a monkey the butter kept on a swing, and looking about with his eyes through caution and fear, lest somebody should detect the theft, she stealthily approached him from behind.

9. Seeing his mother clearly with a rod in her hand, he hastily got down from the mortar and ran away as if in fear. The Gopa-lady pursued him, but failed to overtake him whom even the minds of yogins impelled and attuned through the force of penance (and concentration) do not reach (even though they are capable to do so.)

10. Running after him, the beautiful mother (lit. mother of beautiful waist) whose speed was impeded by her bulky, moving hips and who was, as it were, followed by the flowers dropping from her braid of hair loosened by the speed (of her running), ultimately caught hold of him.

11. Holding by the hand, she threatened to beat Kṛṣṇa, who was crying for having committed that offence, and was rubbing his eyes with his hand whereby the collyrium (applied to his eyes) got spread all over and who was looking up (to his mother) with eyes bewildered and agitated with fear.

12. Perceiving that her son was terrified, Yaśodā, who was extremely affectionate to her child, threw away the stick. It is traditionally reported that being unable to comprehend the prowess of Kṛṣṇa, Yaśodā wished to bind him with a rope.

13*-14. In relation with him there is neither inside nor outside, neither before nor behind; but he is in front and at the back, outside and inside the universe; (nay) he is the universe itself. Presuming such unmanifest supra-sensuous Lord who had assumed a human form, to be her child, the cowherd-woman tried to bind him with a rope to the mortar, as one would tie down an ordinary human child.

15. While binding her child with a rope for his mischief, the cowherd lady found that it was short by two-fingers

* VJ. : There is nothing self-existent and self-dependent as he is everywhere. Since he exists from eternity to eternity nothing pre-exists him or outlasts him. He exists before and after the universe, and is immanent and transcendent to the world. He is the universe as everything is within his power.

(about an inch or so). So she added to it another piece (of rope).

16. When that (additional) string fell short, she tied yet another piece. In this way, whatever additional piece (of string) she brought, it too fell short by two fingers (about an inch).

17. While Yaśodā was putting together all the ropes in her house (and still it fell short by two fingers), all the Gopa-women laughed; and she too joined them smiling, but felt amazed at it.

18. Noticing the over-exhaustion of his mother whose body was bathed in perspiration, and the wreaths of flowers from whose loosened braids of hair were falling down, Kṛṣṇa, out of compassion for her, allowed himself to be tied.

19. In this way, dear Parīkṣit! was demonstrated his subjection to the control of his votaries by Hari, even though Kṛṣṇa is absolutely self-dependent and has the whole of the universe along with its rulers, under his control.

20. Neither (his son) god Brahmā nor (his very Soul) Lord Śiva nor the goddess Lakṣmī who clings to his person, was recipient of such grace as was enjoyed by the Gopī (Yaśodā) at the hands of that bestower of *Mokṣa* (Liberation).

21. The glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa who is (i.e. has assumed the form of) the son of Yaśodā is not so easily attainable to the ascetics who identify themselves with their bodies and to those who possess spiritual wisdom, as to those who are devoted to him and identify themselves with him.[1]

22. While his mother Yaśodā was engrossed in carrying out her household duties, Lord Kṛṣṇa noticed that the pair of Arjuna trees were in their former birth, two *Guhyakas*, the sons of Kubera, the bestower of wealth.

23. They were known as Nala Kūbara and Maṇigrīva. Endowed with great splendour as they were, they were reduced to the state of trees, through the curse imprecated by Nārada due to their pride.

1. vl. *ātma-potānām* / Who make him their only raft to cross *Saṁsāra* —VR., VJ.

## CHAPTER TEN

*(Uprooting of Arjuna Trees—Redemption of Nalakūbara and Maṇigrīva)*

*The King (Parīkṣit) enquired* :

1. Worshipful Sage ! Be pleased to narrate (to us) the reason of the pronouncement of imprecation on them (viz. Nalakūbara and Maṇigrīva by (Nārada). What was their reproachful act which aroused the ire[1] of that divine sage.[2]

*Śrī Śuka replied* :

2-3. On becoming the attendants of god Rudra, those two sons of Kubera, grew puffed up with vain gloriousness. Dead drunk with the liquor called Vāruṇī, thoroughly inebriated with their eyes rolling through intoxication, they, in company of singing women, were strolling through a pleasure-garden in the vicinity of mount Kailāsa, and through woodlands full of blossom, on the banks of the Mandākinī (the Gaṅgā in heaven).

4. Entering the waters of the Gaṅgā which were beautified by blossoming lotus-beds, they sported amorously[3] with young damsels, like unto a pair of he-elephants with she-elephants.[4]

5. By the will of the Providence, the worshipful divine sage Nārada happened to see the pair of gods there, and perceived them to be intoxicated (and speaking vulgarly), Oh descendant of Kurus.

1. *tamas*—(i) Ignorance which is the cause of anger—SS. (Sudarśan Sūri)

(ii) aroused the *Tamo-guṇa* (in Nārada), the effect of which is anger —VJ.

2. v.l. in VR. : *yena vā devarṣiḥ kupitaḥ* 'which enraged the divine sage'.

3. KD. being a born poet gives a graphic description of various love-sports indulged in by them.

4. VB. enumerates a series of sinful mistakes and grievous offences committed by Nalakūbara and Maṇigrīva in VV. 2-4, and shows that the curse by Nārada was inevitable and a perfectly just punishment meted out to them.

6. Seeing him, the celestial damsels felt ashamed at their nudity, and were afraid of being cursed. Instantly and quickly they put on their garments. But not so the two Yakṣas (whose godliness disappeared due to their being drunk), and they stayed on stark naked (despite the persistent requests of the celestial nymphs).

7. Observing that those two sons of god Kubera were inebriated with wine, and blind with arrogance of affluence, he (Nārada) with a view of showering grace on them, intended to pronounce an imprecation, and spoke (lit. sang) as follows :

*Nārada said* :

8. In the case of a person who indulges in the enjoyment of objects of pleasure, no other effect of *rajo-guṇa* (such as the pride of heredity or of scholarship) is powerful enough to cloud his understanding and good sense as the pride of one's affluence. For wherever this form of vanity predominates, women, wine and gambling are found associated with it.

9. Where such pride of wealth is dominant, animals are ruthlessly slaughtered by such merciless persons of uncontrolled mind who (wrongly) regard this transient perishable body as immune from decrepitude of old age and above mortality.

10. Though this body is designated as god (among men—*naradeva* or on the earth—*bhūdeva*), it is ultimately reduced to what are called worms, excretion and ashes. Does the person who harms living beings[1] for the sake of his body, know his own interest ? Does he know that such violence leads to hell ?

11. Does this body belong to the employer (who gives food or money for its maintenance), or to the procreator (or father), or to the mother (who conceives it and nourishes it during childhood), or the maternal grand-father (who adopts it by *putrikā dharma* stipulations), or to the mighty (who compels forced labour), or to the purchaser (in the slave-market when presented for sale), or to fire (which consumes it when cremated), or to the dog (when it lies unclaimed and uncremated) ?

1. VJ takes *bhūta-dhṛk* as 'a person acting against Brahman by indulging in talk of being identical with Brahman, but SS., VR., VB. etc. follow ŚR in interpreting *bhūta* as 'a living being'.

12. Knowing that this body is the common property (of all as stated above), and that it comes out of and vanishes into something unmanifest, what wise person other than an ignorant fool, regard it as his real self, and would kill living beings (for its sake).

12A. *VJ.'s text adds* here, again a verse composed of 9b and 10a above.

13. Poverty is the best (sight-recovering) collyrium to wicked persons blinded with the pride of affluence. A poverty-stricken person correctly realizes that all others are like himself (experiencing the same pleasures or pangs of life).

14. Just as a person, part of whose body is pricked with a thorn, does not wish similar pain to other creatures, as he realizes the equality of other creatures by their gestures expressing pain. But such understanding sympathy is not found in those who have no experience of being pricked.

15. Being devoid of obdurate egotism, a poor person becomes free from all forms of pride here. The severe hardships that come to his lot, by the will of the Providence, serve as a great austere penance (Hence poverty is conducive to final Liberation).

16. The senses and organs of a poverty-stricken person whose body gets over-emaciated with starvation, and who longs to have food (sufficient to keep body and soul together), become too much dried up and feeble to commit injury (and consequently the desire for violence also disappears[1]).

17. Saintly persons who regard all as equals (with impartiality) associate themselves only with the poor. It is in the company of the righteous that he destroys all his thirst (passion for having worldly objects), and in a short while becomes absolutely pure.[2]

18. What interest have the righteous saints who possess equanimity and equal regard to all, and yearn for the attainment of the feet of Lord Viṣṇu, in the wicked people who are

1. Cf *viṣayā vinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ /*
—BG. 2.59

2. v.l. *ārād hi siddhyati*, 'attains final Liberation within a short time'
—VJ.

arrogantly proud of their wealth, and who resort to sinful company and hence deserve to be ignored ?

19. I shall, therefore, relieve the pride born of ignorance of these two woman-addicts of uncontrollable mind, blinded with the pride of wealth, and now inebriated with the sweet liquor Vāruṇī.

20-21. Inasmuch as, these two, though the sons of an (exalted) protector of the sphere (Kubera) are too steeped in *tamas* (arrogance begotten of ignorance) to be conscious of their nudity, and are haughtily vainglorious (to remain so even in my presence), these deserve to be (nude, unbending) immobile trees so that they won't behave so again. They will, however, through my grace and favour, retain the memory (and consciousness of their guilt and punishment) even in that immobile stage.

22. After one hundred celestial years, they, who had by then acquired devotion (unto Vāsudeva), will attain to the presence of Lord Vāsudeva, and shall be restored to the celestial status.

*Śri Śuka said* :

23. After pronouncing the imprecation thus, the divine sage went to the hermitage of Nārāyaṇa, while Nalakūbara and Maṇigrīva were transformed into the twin-Arjuna trees.

24. To make good the veracity of the words of the sage (Nārada) who is the prominent one among his devotees, Lord Kṛṣṇa slowly went to the spot where the twin Arjuna trees grew together.

25. "The divine sage Nārada is the most beloved of me. These (twin-Arjuna trees) are the sons of Kubera. I shall now accomplish what has been sung (prophesied) by the noble-souled sage".

26. With this aim in view, Kṛṣṇa crawled in between the twin-Arjuna trees. By the mere entry of his person between them, the mortar fell crosswise.

27. The trees were vehemently uprooted by the child, with a rope tied round its belly, while it was dragging the mortar after him. They fell down with a terrific crash, their

trunks, leaves and branches were heavily shaken by the forcible pull exerted by the Supreme Lord.

28. Irradiating all direction with their dazzling lustre, emerged the two Siddhas like fire emanating from trees. Bowing down with their heads to Kṛṣṇa, the Lord and protector of the entire universe, they, now absolutely free from egotism, praised him with folded palms.

29.* "Oh Kṛṣṇa ! Oh Supreme Brahman in human form ! Oh great *yogin* (whose infinite power is unimaginable), you are the primordial 'Supreme Person'. Brāhmaṇas (i.e. persons who have realized the Brahman or are experts in the Vedas) know that the universe both manifest and un-manifest is your form.

30.** You are the One, the controller of the body, vital breaths, the 'I-ness', senses and organs of all beings. You are the glorious Lord Viṣṇu, whose form (sport) is the time-spirit, and who is the imperishable Absolute Ruler.

31. You are the Subtle Prakṛti constituted of the three *guṇas—sattva, rajas* and *tamas*. You are the (evolute of Prakṛti called) *Mahat-tattva*. You are the witness, the Puruṣa—the Inner controller of all beings who know all the modifications and changes in all beings.

* (i) VR : Your subtle body (composed of both *cit* and *acit* (is the cause of which your gross body (consisting of *cit and acit*) is the effect.

(ii) VJ : The universe is full of your presence, but does not limit your power or nature. You are the Supreme Brahman who pervade the universe.

KD: You are the First Cause as both Prakṛti and Puruṣa were evolved (lit. brought to light) from you.

** (i) VR. :— You are not only the material cause (*upādāna-kāraṇa*), but also the instrumental or efficient cause (*nimittakāraṇa*) of the universe. As the Controller of bodies of all beings, you are the cause of subsistence of the world, and as the Time-spirit you are the destroyer of the world—but though a cause, you undergo, no change or modification.

(ii) VB. This verse describes how the Lord pervades all forms from the *adhi-daivika* point of view.

The time spirit on which depends rulership, affluence (*aiśvarya*) is not merely the sport or activity of the Lord, but the Lord himself.

32.* It is not possible that you can be perceived through the modifications of Prakṛti (e.g. intelligence, 'I'-ness, cognitive and conative senses), or through the *guṇas* (modes of Prakṛti) which lie within the ken of perception. What being in this world, enveloped as he is in the product of *guṇas* (viz. his physical body), is capable of realizing you who were already in existence before the creation (of the Universe).

33.** Obeisance to you glorious Lord Vāsudeva, the Creator (of the Universe), the perfect Brahman who have concealed your great glory by means of *guṇas* which are illumined by your own effulgence.

34. You are (really) incorporal. But your incarnations in corporal frames are perceived by their various heroic feats which are too unparallel or unequalled and of too supreme excellence to be found in those associated with and conditioned by corporal forms.

35. You, the Lord of all auspicious blessings[1], are such (as described above). At present your Lordship has descended in this incarnation with a part of your divineself[2], for the prosperity and emancipation of the entire world.

*(i) (VJ) : Hari alone is capable of perceiving himself. He cannot be seen by Brahmā and other deities or Jīvas presiding over the evolutes of Prakṛti like *mahat ahaṁkāra* etc. Deities who are always near him like Śrī, Durgā etc. can perceive him to some extent. Products of Prakṛti (e.g. things in the world) are perceptible to senses, but are incapable of seeing the Brahman.

(ii) VT : You are endowed with natural qualities like mercifulness etc. which undergo no change or modifications, as can be actually experienced. You cannot, however, be realized as you actually are. Who though properly possessed of qualities like *bhakti* (devotion) and though your actions have taken place in Nanda's Gokula and as such are famous, is capable of realizing you and your *līlā*s adequately ?

(iii) VC : It is through your Grace that you can be visualized, otherwise you are always invisible.

** VT : regards this as salutation to the deities in the two manifestations (*Vyūhas*) of the *Pañcarātrins*. Thus the 1st manifestation is Vāsudeva, *Vedhas* is Saṅkarṣaṇa, the creator of the world.

1. : VT. The Lord who confers whatever is desired by the devotees.

2. *aṁśa-bhāgena* etc, :

(i) VR : You have incarnated along with your part (or ray) Balarāma for the creation and prosperity of the world.

36. Salutation to you The Supreme bliss ! Hail to you the supremely auspicious Lord, the son of Vasudeva, the blemishless happiness incarnate, the Lord and protector of Yādavas and Gopas.

37. Be pleased to allow us, the two servants of your follower (Rudra), to go, Oh Perfect Lord ! It is through the Grace of the Sage Nārada, that we had the good fortune of (being blest with) the sight of your glorious Lordship.

38. (May our previous nature not reappear). May our speech be engaged in extolling your excellent qualities and actions; our ears in listening to your stories; our hands be devoted to do your work, and our mind in musing over and remembering your feet; our head bowing to the world which is your abode, and our sight in seeing saintly persons who are but your form.

*Śri Śuka said* :

39. The glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa, the ruler of Gokula who remained tied down to the mortar with a rope, laughingly spoke to the two Guhyakas who had glorified him thus.

*The Lord replied* :

40. It was already known to me that the sage Nārada of a compassionate heart had favoured you with his grace, in degrading you (to the status of trees), by uttering an imprecation on you, who were blind with the arrogance of affluence.

41. Just as no obstruction (from darkness etc.) to the sight of man can remain when the sun appears, no bondage (of sin or *saṁsāra*) can exist at the sight of righteous Souls who

(ii) VB : incarnated with a part ofyour (original self) : *aṁśena bhāgena ca . . . avatīrṇaḥ*

(iii) VJ : *bhāgena-aṁśena* VJ. insists that Kṛṣṇa is an incarnation of Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Lord.

(iv) VT : The dogma of Gauḍīya Vaiṣnavas is that Kṛṣṇa is not a part-incarnation, but the Lord (*bhagavān*) Himself, as stated in V. 33 above: *tasmai . . . Kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam! ityādau prasiddhyā*

The same is implied here though VT. is silent on these words in the texts.

(v) KD : takes *aṁśa* as 'Kṛtsnāṁśa'—entirety.

have realized the *ātman* (and possess equanimity of mind), and have thoroughly devoted their hearts to me.

42. Oh Nalakūbara (and Maṇigrīva) ! Now that unswerving devotion toward me is enkindled in you, do you proceed to your own abode. The most covetable supreme devotion unto me which terminates the *saṁsāra*, has now been generated in you.

*Śri Śuka said* :

43. Being thus addressed, they both circumambulated the Lord tied to the wooden mortar. They repeatedly prostrated themselves before him (to show respect), and with his leave, proceeded towards the North.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

*Exodus from Gokula—Destruction of demons Vatsa and Baka*

*Śri Śuka said* :

1. Hearing the crashing sound of the falling (Arjuna) trees, cowherds headed by Nanda (thinking it to be a roar of thunder) rushed to the spot, afraid as they were of a thunderbolt, Oh prominent Kuru.

2. They saw the twin Arjuna trees fallen to the ground. They were bewildered as they could not guess the cause of that fall which was quite obvious.

3. It was the child who was dragging the wooden mortar tied to it with a cord. (But not believing in it) they got distressed as to who did it, what could be the cause of that wonder or whether it is an evil portent.

4. The boys (who were present there) reported, "It (the uprooting of the trees) has been done by him (Kṛṣṇa) who going between the trees dragged the mortar, which lay athwart the trees. We also saw two divine figures (rising from the fallen trees)."

5. They did not believe in the report of the boys. The sceptics reasoned with themselves the impossibility of uprooting the two big trees by the child, while a few others had some reservations in their minds (as they remembered Kṛṣṇa's previous feats).

6. It is traditionally reported that seeing his own child tethered with a cord and dragging the mortar, Nanda with his countenance beaming with a smile, set him free.

7. Glorious Lord (of the Universe) though he was, he sometime danced like a child, sometimes sang loudly and behaved like a wooden doll under the control of the Gopīs (cowherd women), when they encouraged him with their clapping of hands and coaxings.

8. Commanded by them, sometimes he would bring articles like a wooden stool, a measure or a pair of wooden sandals, and sometimes he would swing up his arms bringing delight and affection to his own people (his devotees).

9. To the people who recognize him (as God), he, thereby demonstrates his subservience to (the will of) his servants. The glorious Lord thus brought great joy to (i.e. in the life of) people in Vraja through his child-like playful activities.

10*. Hearing the vendor's cry, "Oh people, purchase fruits", Kṛṣṇa rushed to him quickly with food grains (in the hollow of his palms to give in exchange of fruit), desirous of

*Verses 10-20, both inclusive, are not commented upon by ŚR and VB. (as they obviously do not recognize them as a part of the text), but VR., VJ., VT., JG., VC. have recognized them as an integral part of the Bh. P. and have annotated on them. VT. notes that though there are variations in the order of these verses, the Gauḍīya Sampradāya text is followed.

Though it is not possible to present a concordance of the various text-traditions of the Bh. P., the complexity of the problem can be indicated by comparing ŚR. and VJ.'s text here. Ch. XI in ŚR. is Ch. XII in VJ. In this Chapter after the 9th verse, the order of vv in VJ. is as follows :

I. Vv 10-18.

21-29 (in ŚR.) : From *Gopa-vṛddhā mahot-pātān*...upto *bhavatāṁ yadi rocate* /

getting the fruits, though he himself is the bestower of fruits (of actions, prayers, etc.) to all.

11. The fruit-seller-woman filled with fruits (the hollow of the) palms of his hands from which grains were slipping down (through the gap between them) and the basket of fruits was filled with precious stones.

12. On one occasion, queen Rohiṇī called (Bala-) Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, the uprooter of the Arjuna trees, who were engrossed in playing with children on the bank of the river.

13. When both the sons being deeply interested in play did not come back despite her calling, Rohiṇī sent Yaśodā who was so much affectionate to her child.

14. Yaśodā, with her breasts overflowing with affection for her child, repeatedly shouted for her child who along with his elder brother was playing with the children beyond the (usual) time-limit.

15. "Oh Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa of lotus-eyes ! Child ! Come up and suck at my bosom. Enough of playing. You must be feeling fatigued with hunger and exhausted with exertions in playing, my sonny.

16. Oh Rāma ! Come quickly with your younger brother. Oh child. It is very early in the morning that you had a breakfast. You must take food now, Oh delight of the family.

17. Oh Dāśārha ! Nanda, the head of this Vraja who is about to take his meals is waiting for you. Do come and bring joy to us both. Oh boys ! You return to your houses.

18. Your body has been covered with dust, Oh child !

II. 19A (extra verse) *tac chrutvaika-dhiyo gopāḥ sarve Nanda purogamāḥ|*
*Upa-nanda-vaco rājan pratinandya gṛhān yayuḥ ||* 19.

Vs. 20-28

III. 12-20 (in ŚR) :

*Sarit-tīrāgatam Kṛṣṇam kṛtavatyathodayam* (?)

IV 29A

(Additional verse) :

*atha Śandaḥ samūhūya gopānidam abhāṣata |*
*Śveto Vṛndāvanam yāmo yattā bhavatha māciram |*

V The remaining 30 verses from *tac chrutvaikadhiyā gopāḥ sādhu sādhviti vādinaḥ|* etc. are common to ŚR. & VJ. This is the XII ch. in VJ.

Go and take your bath. The star, presiding over your birth, is in the ascent. Get purified by bath, and give cows to Brāhmaṇas.

19. Behold your play-mates. They have been washed and well-adorned by their mothers. You also take your bath, have your meals, and after getting well-adorned, go to play."

20. In this way, Yaśodā whose mind was bound with the ties of maternal affection, regarded, Kṛṣṇa, the crown of all as her child. She took both Rāma and Kṛṣṇa by hand, and brought them to her house, and made them perform the auspicious rites.

*Śuka said* :

21. Observing extremely ominous portents in the Bṛhadvana (Gokula), elderly Gopas (cowherds) like Nanda and others met in a conference and deliberated the measures to be adopted in the interest of Vraja.

22. Out of them, a cowherd called Upananda, who was senior to others in wisdom and age, and who was endowed with a penetrating insight into the exigencies of the time, place and things (situation), and a well-wisher of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa advised as follows :

23. "We, the well-wishers of Gokula should now migrate from this place; for, terrible portents of an evil nature forboding destruction of our children are visiting this place.

24. This child Kṛṣṇa certainly had a miraculous escape with great difficulty from the ogress (Pūtanā), the slayer of children. It was surely through the grace of Lord Hari, that the cart did not fall on Kṛṣṇa.

25. He was carried away to the skies, the region of birds, by a demon in the form of a whirlwind. He fell on a rock, but was protected by great gods (our deities).

26. It is sheerly due to the protection afforded by Lord Acyuta that this child or any other boy should not die on getting in between the (Arjuna) trees (as they crashed).

27. Before Vraja is not overtaken by any calamity indicated by these evil portents, let us repair to some other place along with our children and followers and attendants.

28. There is a virgin forest tract called Vṛndāvana which along with its sacred hills, pasturage, trees and plants, is suitable to our cattle and fit to be a happy settlement to our milkmen, women and cattle.

29. Let us, therefore, shift there, this very day. Get our carts and vehicles ready. Be quick (No delay please). If you so approve of it, let our wealth, the herds of cattle, go ahead in advance."

29A. *VJ.'s text adds* :

Having heard the speech of Upananda with concentration of mind (and attentively), all the cowherds of which Nanda was the leader, approved of it, and repaired to their houses, Oh King.

29B. Then Nanda summoned together all the Gopas and directed (spoke) as follows:

"Tomorrow we shall go from this place to Vṛndāvana. Be prepared. Don't delay."

30. Unanimously approving his speech, all Gopas exclaimed "That's right ! Very good". They got their respective conveyances ready with their effects, packed and loaded.

31. Having put into their carriages the aged persons, young children and their women-folk along with utensils and other accessories, the Gopas who were all alert carried bows already strung, in their hands.

32. Keeping their wealth of cattle in their front in advance, accompanied by their family priests, they started on their journey with a flourish of blowing horns and sounding trumpets on all sides.

33. Mounted on chariots, the Gopa women of lovely complexion, with fresh application of saffron-paint to their breasts, wore strings of gold coins round their necks, and put on excellent garments, they felt supremely happy and sang the sportive acts of Kṛṣṇa.

34. So also Yaśodā and Rohiṇī occupied the same carriage, and were eager to hear the sportive acts of their dear children, shone (brightly) with Kṛṣṇa and Rāma (on their laps).

35. Entering Vṛndāvana which was pleasant in all seasons, they, with a crescent-shaped formation of their

vehicles, set up the habitation (for them and the cattle), semicircular like unto the half disc of the moon.

36. Beholding the forest of Vṛndāvana, the Govardhana hill (nearby), and the sand-banks of the Yamunā, the hearts of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa surged with great joy.

37. In this way, giving delight to the inhabitants of Vraja with their child-like sportive activities and sweet lisping, they, in due course, began to tend calves.

38. In the vicinity of their habitation, and in the company of cowherd boys, they tended the calves, taking with them various articles of play.

39-40. Sometimes they played on flutes. Sometimes they used fruits of the Bilva tree or of the Emblic Myrobalan (*āmalaka*) for throwing as balls; sometimes they played kicking those with their feet, making a tinkling noise of small bells (of the anklets); sometimes they imitated the cattle with two-three boys as the tender of cattle, sometime they played the part of bellowing and fighting bulls. Sometimes they imitated the cries of birds like swans and peacocks. In this way they roved simulating ordinary children.

41. On one occasion, while both Rāma and Kṛṣṇa were pasturing the calves along with their friends, a demon came there, with the intention of killing Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

42. On seeing him assume the form of a calf and mix with the herd of calves, he (Kṛṣṇa) pointed him out to Balarāma, and slowly approached the demon, posing as if he knew nothing about him.

43. Catching hold of him by his hind legs and tail, and whirling him round, he hurled him lifeless to the top of the wood-apple (*Kapittha*) tree. The huge-bodied demon (who assumed his demonic form at the time of death) fell down along with wood-apples which were made to fall (with the impact of the huge dead body).

44. Astonished to see him fall, all children cried out, "Bravo ! Well-done !" Gods being highly delighted, showered flowers.

45. The sole protectors of all the worlds became the two tenders of calves, and with the breakfast in their wallet, roamed about leading the calves in their charge to pasture.

46. On one occasion, all the cowherd boys wanted to take their respective herd of calves to water. They went to a tank[1] of water, made the calves to drink and they also drank of it.

47. The boys saw there standing a monstrous creature like unto a peak of a mountain sundered by (Indra's) thunderbolt, and slipped (of the mountain) and they got terrified.

48. It was verily a powerful demon called Baka who assumed the form of a stork. Swooping down suddenly, the powerful monster with a sharp beak, swallowed up Kṛṣṇa.

49. Perceiving Kṛṣṇa swallowed up by a big crane, children like Balarāma (but not Balarāma) became stupefied like organs and senses of the body in the absence of the vital breath.

50. But Baka had to vomit out Kṛṣṇa, the son of a cowherd (Nanda), but (as a matter of fact) the father of god Brahmā, the creator of the world, as Kṛṣṇa burnt like fire the root of his palate. Finding him unhurt, Baka again attacked Kṛṣṇa with his bill, to kill him.

51. As Baka, the friend of Kaṁsa, rushed at him, Kṛṣṇa, the protector of the righteous[2], caught hold of him by the two halves of the bill, and while the children were looking on, tore him up like a blade of grass in a sportive way, and brought delight to residents of the celestial world.

52. The denizens of heaven then showered the slayer of the demon Baka with jasmine and other flowers from the celestial garden Nandana, and praised him, expressing delight by blowing of conchs, and sounding of drums, beholding which the cowherd boys stood agape with amazement.

53. On finding Kṛṣṇa safely released from the mouth of Baka and return to the playground, children like Balarāma and others, like unto senses would do to the vital breath, embraced him and felt relieved and happy. Collecting their calves together, they returned to Vraja and reported (sang) that exploit (of Kṛṣṇa).

1. VT. locates it to the east of the Nandīśvara hill, near the spot now known as *baka-sthala*.

2. v.l. *satāṁ gatiḥ* 'The final abode of the righteous'—VT.

54. Astonished to hear it, Gopa men and women, who had an intensely loving regard for him, gazed him with eager (lit. thirsty) eyes, as if he had returned from the land of the dead.

55. They said, "how wonderful yet pitiable that this child should have so many mortal enemies. However, it is they who suffered the evil consequences, as they spelt terror to others previously.

56. Howsoever terrible-looking the demons be, they dare not and cannot overpower him at all. Approaching him with a desire to kill, they themselves get destroyed like moths in fire.

57. Oh ! The words of those who are conversant with the Brahman, never prove to be untrue. What the worshipful Garga predicted has been exactly found to be true (by experience)."

58. In this way, recounting with joys the stories of Kṛṣṇa and Rāma, Nanda and other cowherds passed their time happily and did not experience the agonies of *saṁsāra*.

59. In this way, they (Kṛṣṇa and Rāma) passed their childhood at Vraja in child-like sports such as hide-and-seek, constructing dams in play, jumping like monkeys and the like.

## CHAPTER TWELVE[1]

### *Slaying of Aghāsura*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. One day, intending to have his break-fast (first meal) in the woods, Hari got up early in the morning and woke up his fellow cowherd boys (tending the calves) by the charming sound of his horn, and proceeded from Vraja with calves going in front.

1. VJ.'s text omits this and the next two chapters. The omission is noted and the chapters are annotated by SS., VR., VB., JG., and VC. who express their disapproval of this omission. But VT.'s tirade against this omission is vehement.

2. Immediately, at that clarion-call rushed forth joyfully thousands[1] of affectionate young boys simultaneously, equipping themselves with slings, sticks, horns and flutes, each driving his own herd of thousands of calves.

3. It is traditionally reported that making their own calves join the herd of innumerable calves of Kṛṣṇa, and grazing them, they diverted themselves in children's games at various places.

4. Although they were already adorned (by their mothers) with glass-beads, Guñjā seeds, precious stones and gold ornaments, they decorated themselves with fruits, tender foliage, bunches of flowers, feathers and coloured earths.

5. They stole the slings and other objects belonging to each other, and when detected, they threw them at a distance. Boys who were sitting there threw them still further laughing all the while, returning them (to the respective owners when they were on the point of shedding tears).

6. If Kṛṣṇa had gone to a distance to observe the beauty of the forest, they vied with each other in touching Kṛṣṇa first and enjoyed themselves (in this competition).

7. Some played on the flutes; some blew their horns, some sang humming (hummed) in tune with black-bees, some imitated the sweet notes of the cuckoo.

8. Some ran with the shadows of the (flying) birds; some walked beautifully like royal swans; some sat down with the cranes, while others danced with peacocks.

9. Some pulled monkey's tails dangling down from branches of trees, while others climbed trees along with the tails in hand. Some were making wry faces at monkeys while others were jumping from one branch to another (like monkeys).

10. Hopping with frogs, some became drenched with the waters of the streams and waterfalls; some were laughing at their own shadows (while making faces at one's own reflection), while others cursed their own echoes.

11. In this way, the cowherd boys who amassed a vast fund of merits (in the past), played with Kṛṣṇa who was to the knowers the veritable Brahman, with all the realization of the

1. Innumerable—: *atsānāṁ bālānāṁ ca asaṅkhyeyatvam uktam*—VT., VC.

absolute bliss, the Supreme Deity to the devotees who dedicated themselves to his service, and a human child to those who are under the influence of Māyā or Ignorance.

12. Is it possible to describe the blessedness and good fortune of the inhabitants of Vraja unto whose ken of perception he presented himself in person? The Lord, the dust of whose feet cannot be obtained (and attained to) by the self-controlled *yogīs* who have performed austerities for many past lives.

13. Now (on one occasion), a powerful demon named Agha who could not tolerate the sight of their happy games, attacked the demon whose vulnerable point i.e. death was eagerly watched over even by immortals who had been anxious to safeguard their lives (from him), even though they assimilated (drunk) nectar (and hence had no fear from death).[1]

14. Seeing the Gopa children of whom Kṛṣṇa was the leader, the demon Agha, the younger brother of Bakī (Pūtanā) and Baka (the demon killed by Kṛṣṇa), who was deputed by Kaṁsa (to kill Kṛṣṇa) said to himself, "This is the slayer of my brother and sister. To avenge them both I shall now kill Kṛṣṇa along with his army (of cowherd boys).

15. When these (Kṛṣṇa and his cowherd companions) are killed (and thus are made as if propitiatory libations of sesamum seeds and water to my departed brother and sister), all the residents of Vraja are as good as dead. Why worry

1. *Or* ŚR.: The sight of their happy games which even gods who have drunk nectar are anxious to realize in their hearts, to sustain their life thereby.

Life is not really fruitful by drinking nectar but by drinking the ambrosia of the Lord's name and by remembering and contemplating the sports of the glorious Lord.

KD.: Gods who attained immortality by drinking nectar wish to take a birth as mortals on the earth, and participate in singing the eulogy of Kṛṣṇa's exploits.

VT. takes *amara* as 'Liberated beings who, being free from gross and subtle bodies, are immortal'. Though they have imbibed *amṛta* or *Mokṣa*, they desire to take a *Līlāvigraha* (sportive body) to participate in Hari's sport.

According to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, a soul does not lose his individuality in the Mokṣa stage.

about the Physical body when the vital breath (life) is departed? And all those who live (as human beings) have (i.e. consider) their children as their very life."

16. Having made up his mind thus, wicked demon assumed a gigantic body of a boa-constrictor one *yojana* (eight miles) in length and stout like a big mountain, and with a desire to swallow them all, he lay motionless on their path, with his flabbergasting cavelike mouth kept wide open.

17. His lower lip lay on the earth, while the upper lip touched the clouds; the mouth between them appeared like a vale; his fangs were like summits of mountains, and the interior Part of his mouth was full of darkness; his tongue was like a broad road; his breath was like a tempestuous blast, while his enraged red hot eyes were (scorching) like a forest-conflagration.

18. Beholding him in that form, all regarded it as a beautiful landscape of Vṛndāvana. And in a sportive mood they fancied its semblance to the open mouth of a boa-constrictor.

19. (The children began to talk about it as follows: "Ah! How wonderful! Tell us friends, if this animal like formation (living mountain) standing before us, does or does not resemble the open mouth of a gigantic wicked serpent anxious to devour us all?"

20. (Another boy) "Really! The cloud reddened with rays of the sun looks like his upper lip, while the earth grown red through the reflection (of the cloud) looks like the lower lip."

21. (The third boy) "Look here! The mountain Caverns on its right as well as on the left are as if competing with the jaws; and the rows of lofty mountain-summits as it were vie with its fangs.

22. The broad and long road is vying with its tongue, while the darkness pent up in between the peaks, emulates the darkness in the internal part of its mouth.

23. Look here! The fierce blast of wind heated by forest fire feels like its breath, and the bad odour of animals burnt in that forest fire stinks like the flesh of animals in the stomach of a serpent.

24. "Will he swallow us all if we enter his mouth ?[1] In that case, like Bakāsura, he will meet his death in a moment at the hands of Kṛṣṇa". Saying so, and looking at the fascinating face of Kṛṣṇa, the slayer of Baka, they all entered (that mouth) laughing loudly and clapping their hands.

25. Hearing the mutual discussion—which was far removed from reality—of his friends who were ignorant of the factual state of things, Kṛṣṇa knew that that was really a demon simulating the form of a serpent, as the Lord is present in the hearts of all creatures. The Lord made up his mind to prevent his companions from entering the demon's mouth.

26. In the meanwhile, the children along with the calves entered into the bowels of that demon. But they were not swallowed up by that ogre who remembered the slaying of his dear ones, and was expecting the entry of the slayer of Baka viz. Kṛṣṇa.

27. Lord Kṛṣṇa, who affords protection to all, was moved with compassion to see the helpless children and calves who had no other saviour, and who having slipped out of (the protective control of) his hands, had become the victims of the gastric fire of the demon. He was surprised[2] at the working of the Providence.

28. "What should be done now ? How both the objects viz. the termination of the life of this wicked (demon) and averting the death of these pious innocents, can be achieved ?" Pondering over this problem, and knowing the expedient, the omniscient Hari entered his (Aghāsura's) mouth.

29. At that instant, gods who were behind the curtain of clouds, shrieked in terror bewailing 'Alas ! Alas', while the demonic friends of Aghāsura of whom Kaṁsa was prominent, exulted in joy.

30. Hearing those (cries and shouts of joy), the Imperishable glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa instantly increased himself in huge

1. v.l. *viśantu sarve grasitāḥ kim asmān*:

Let us all enter it. Let us see if he can devour us—VR.

2. VT. states that Kṛṣṇa was surprised at the powerful working of Providence, as it exercised its effect even in the presence of himself, in the case of his devotees who entered the mouth of Aghāsura despite his attempts to prevent them.

dimensions into the throat of that demon who desired to crush to powder Kṛṣṇa along with children and calves.

31. All the passage of breath of that huge-bodied monster was choked, and his eyes shot out of their sockets. He was writhing on all sides. His breath being completely obstructed in his lungs, forced its way out through an aperture in the crown of its head called *Brahma randhra*.

32. When all the vital breaths of the demon passed out that way, Lord Kṛṣṇa revived to life with his nectarine look, all his friends and calves who were as good as dead, and came out of the mouth of the demon again, along with them.

33. A mysterious and powerful light setting ablaze (as it were) all the ten directions, with its brilliant effulgence, rose from the huge body of the serpent. It waited in the firmament for the coming out of the Lord (from the serpent's mouth) and (immediately) entered his person while all the residents of the celestial world simply looked on in amazement.

34. Overjoyed at the accomplishment of their purpose by Kṛṣṇa, the jubilant gods offered their worship by showering flowers, the celestial damsels, through dancing, Gandharvas, experts in vocal music, with singing, those well-versed in instrumental music, by playing on their instruments, Brāhmaṇas (like Nārada) through singing hymns of praise, and his attendants and followers (like Garuḍa and others) with shouts of victory.

35. Hearing in the vicinity of his abode (*Satya Loka*) the auspicious and joyous sounds of wonderful hymns of praise, instrumental and vocal music and shouts of victory, god Brahmā, immediately came to the spot and was wonder-struck at the glorious feat of the Lord.

36. Oh King ! When the hide of that weird boa-constrictor became dry, it served for a long time as a hiding place in playing (like a big cave) to the residents of Vraja.

37. Witnessing the exploit of Hari, as a child of five years, in rescuing them from death (from Aghāsura) and the demon-serpent from death (involved in rebirth in *Saṃsāra*), the cowherd boys of Vraja told to each other of it in his sixth year with equal astonishment.

38. That even a demon like Agha should get his sins absolved by his touch, and should get absorbed in him—an attainment extremely difficult for the unrighteous, is not to be wondered at in the case of Hari who has assumed through his Māyā, the form of a human child, but who is (really) the Creator of all beings, great and small.

39. Even if the semblance of the personality of the Lord is once installed in one's heart in meditation, it leads to the attainment of divine position. What indeed would he not give to Aghāsura in whom he had actually entered, as he had warded off Māyā by the eternal realization of the bliss of his Divine self.[1]

*Sūta said* :

40. Oh Śaunaka and other Brāhmaṇas ! Having heard this wonderful story of his saviour, king Parīkṣit, who was a gift (whose life was protected in womb) by Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Yādavas, found his heart fascinated with it, and again requested Śuka, the Son of Vyāsa, to narrate the same sacred story about him.

*The King (Parīkṣit) submitted*[2]

41. Oh Brāhmaṇa Sage! You said just now that what was done by Hari in his childhood stage of five years, was sung by the cowherd boys in the sixth year (in the *pauganḍa* stage)[3]. Now could an act done at a distant time, can be regarded as done in the present time.

42. Be pleased to narrate to me, Oh Great Yogin, as I feel great curiosity about it. How can it be possible unless it is due to the deluding power (*Māyā*) of Hari, Oh preceptor.

43. Though we are (after all) ordinary Kṣatriyas we are the blessed-most persons in this world, inasmuch as we can

1. Here ends the XIII Chapter in VR.

2. Ch. XIII in VR. begins here.

3. The following are names of different stages in life : childhood *Kaumāra* to the end of the 5th year, boyhood (*Pauganḍa*) to the end of the 10th year Adolescence (*Kiśora*, to the end of the 15th year, Youth after the 15th year (*Yauvana*).

repeatedly drink the hallowing nectar in the form of stories of Lord Kṛṣṇa from you.

*Sūta said* :

44. Oh the most excellent devotee of the Lord ! When thus queried, Śuka, the son of Bādarāyaṇa who lost his senses (i.e. consciousness), due to his immersion in contemplation about Kṛṣṇa when reminded of the Lord by Parīkṣit's question, slowly regained his consciousness of the external world (with difficulty), and began to narrate.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

*Infatuation of God Brahmā*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. A good query has been made by you, Oh highly fortunate king. By listening to the stories of the Lord again and again, you bring new charm to them (by your intelligent questions), Oh best of Hari's votaries.

2. It is the nature of the righteous persons who assimilate only the essentials, that, just as the topic of young damsels is ever fresh and fascinating to gallants[1], the auspicious stories of Lord Acyuta (who never slips from *rasa* appear with fresh sweetness every moment to them, though their speech, ears and minds are devoted to them).

3. Listen to me attentively, Oh king, for I am disclosing to you a secret; for preceptors confide what is even confidential and most hidden, to their loving disciples.

4. Having saved the cowherd boys from death in the mouth of the demon Agha in the aforesaid manner, the Lord brought them to the sandy bank of the river, and spoke as follows:

1. If an extremely disgustible object like a woman can become an object of ever fresh sweetness and love, what need be said about the glorious Lord—VT.

5. "Extremely beautiful is this bank of soft, clean, stainless sand, so spacious and suitable for our sports, oh friends ! It is encircled by beautiful trees, rendered fascinating by the echoing notes and humming of bees attracted here by the sweet smell of blooming lotuses.

6. Let us have our meal here. It is high time now as the day is considerably advanced and we are oppressed with hunger. Let the calves drink water and leisurely graze the grass nearby."

7. Approving of his proposal, (lit. saying 'so be it'), they led the calves to drink water and set them to graze in the green pasture. Untying their slings (and opening their tiffin-boxes), they enjoyed the lunch with the Lord in great delight.

8. Sitting together closely round Kṛṣṇa in a number of circular rows, and all of them facing him[1] with their eyes blooming fully, the boys of Vraja shone (looked brilliant) like lotus-petals grown round the pericarp (of that lotus).

9. Some improvised flowers and leaves as dining plates, some tender leaves and shoots, some fruits, some their wallet-slings, some barks and slabs of stones (for plates), and they enjoyed their meals.

10. (Even though each boy participated something of the dishes, others had brought) each boy severally showed (by gestures etc.) the special taste of his own dish, laughing himself and making all others laugh. (In this way) all took their meals with the Lord (who also tasted something of the dish brought by each of them).

11. The presiding Deity and the Enjoyer of sacrifices as he was, he indulged in child-like sports, and with his flute between his belly and his *pītāmbara* (silken loin cloth[2]) and his horn and cane under the left arm (pit), and holding a soft morsel of boiled rice mixed with curds and (choice eatable) fruits held in between his fingers of his left hand, he occupied a

1. VC. explains that it was Kṛṣna who, being 'possessed of hands, feet, eyes, heads and faces in all directions' (*sarvataḥ pāṇi-pādaṃ tat sarvato'kṣi-śiro-mukham*) faced each of them, making each elated to feel that he alone had the privilege of facing him directly—a blessing denied to others.

KD. : The boys lost their individuality in Kṛṣṇa (13.24-28).

2. Belt-like garment round the waist. (KD).

central position in the circle of his friends, and made them to laugh by cracking jokes—And gods from the celestial regions simply looked on (envious that they are not lucky enough to participate).

12. As the cowherd boys whose minds were absorbed in Lord Kṛṣṇa were having their repast, the calves, being allured by luxuriantly grown pasture, strayed away deep into the woods, oh scion of Bharata.

13. Perceiving that they were overwhelmed with fear (at the straying away of calves), Kṛṣṇa, the terror to the terrors of the world, reassured them, saying, "Friends, (Don't worry—lit. cast aside all your fears). Please do not disturb your meal. I shall fetch all the calves here".

14. With these words, while the morsel of boiled rice mixed with curds was in his hand, Kṛṣṇa went in search of his calves over the mountains, in caverns, in bushes and thick jungle.

15. God Brahmā (the lotus-born god)[1] who formerly stood in heaven to witness the release (of the cowherd boys and calves) from Aghāsura and was greatly astonished, desired to see another sweet feat of the Lord who assumed the form of a child through his Māyā power, and he lifted up the calves and abducted the cowherd boys, and carried them to some place and vanished himself.

16. Not being able to find the calves, and failing to see the cowherd boys on the sandy bank, Kṛṣṇa searched for both of them all round.

17. Not finding either the calves or their protectors (cowherd boys) anywhere within that forest, Kṛṣṇa who knows everything in the Universe, understood it to be the work of god Brahmā.

18. Thereupon, with a view to bring joy to the mothers of the cowherd-boys (by restoring their children and calves), as well as to god Brahmā (by allowing the boys and calves to

1. VC. suggests a pun on *jala* (*ḍa*) due to the interchangeability of -d- and -l-. A lotus is born out of *jala* (water) which is *jaḍa* (wanting in intelligence) and god Brahmā is born out of that knowledgeless inert being called lotus. Hence his own intelligence shares the stupidity of its heredity.

remain in his charge), Kṛṣṇa, the Maker and the Controller of the Universe, converted himself both (into the cowherd boys and the calves).

19. Having exactly changed him into the same size and number of small bodies of the cowherd boys and calves, with same proportion and size of their limbs like hand, feet etc., taking with them the same (number and size of) sticks, horns, flutes, decorative leaves on the head, slings and wearing the same clothes and ornaments, and assuming the same goodness of nature (or character), accomplishments, name, form and age as well as their ways of sporting etc. (of each individual), the birthless Lord Kṛṣṇa, being thus identical with all forms, shone there as a concrete illustration, proving the veracity of the Vedic text : "Everything in the universe is pervaded by Viṣṇu."

20. Having converted himself into the form of calves which were tended back by his ownself in the form of cowherd boys, and playing with his own forms, Kṛṣṇa, the self and the self of all, entered Vraja.

21. Having taken the respective calves separately to their own houses, and tying them into their respective stalls, he entered the respective houses of the cowherd boys and stayed there in their form, oh King.

22. Rising hurriedly at the sound of the flutes, the mothers (of the cowherd boys) raised them up and hugged them fast in their arms. With their breasts overflowing with milk of motherly affection which was sweet like nectar and inebriating, they suckled the *Para Brahman* mistaking him for their children.

23. Observing the time-schedule of games etc., during different parts of the day, and returning in time in the evening at the usual time, Kṛṣṇa (the consort of Lakṣmī) in the form of a cowherd boy) was fondled and treated with shampooing, bathing, anointing (with sandal paste, pigments etc.), decorating (with ornaments), evil-warding rites, applying the decorative mark (*tilaka*) on the forehead, feeding (with dishes) etc. (by the Gopīs). He also filled them with great joy by his sportive winsome ways.

24. Thereupon the cows returned hurriedly to their own pens, and inviting their respective calves by their specific

lowing-calls, suckled them with milk overflowing from their udders, licking the calves (all over), every now and then.

25. The maternal affection of the kine and the Gopīs towards him (in the form of calves and cowherd boys), was the same as before, except that their affection grew more ardent, and Hari's behaviour towards them as (their) child was the same as before, but there was no delusion (in Kṛṣṇa's relation with them, as was in the case of their real children).

26. (In this way) for one year, the affection of the residents of Vraja towards their children grew gradually every day (as they were the parts *aṁśas* of the Lord), but in the case of Kṛṣṇa it developed in an unprecedent way and became unlimited (as he was the *aṁśin*—the Lord himself).

27. In this way, protecting and being tended himself in the form of calves, by himself, in the capacity of cowherd boys, he sported himself for one year, in the forest, as well as in Vraja.

28. One day, while it was some five or six days to complete the period of a year, Kṛṣṇa, alongwith Balarāma entered the forest, while they were tending the calves.

29. The cows which were grazing grass on the top of the Govardhana hill saw from afar their calves pasturing near Vraja.

30. As soon as the herd of cows saw them, they being overpowered with affection for the calves, forgot themselves. They rushed by a path difficult to be followed by their protectors (cowherds). Like bipeds (due to fast running on all fours), with their necks contracted towards their humps and with tails raised up, they dashed on speedily bellowing (all the while), and with milk oozing out of their udders, all the way.

31. Coming down to the foot of the Govardhana hill, the cows, though they had their own calves, suckled them with the milk from their udders, licking the bodies of the calves (with such intense eagerness) as if they wanted to swallow them.

32. Being extremely angry at their disgrace and inability in restraining and controlling the cows, and making their way with great difficulty through the inaccessible hilly track, they saw their sons, along with the calves.

33. With their hearts submerged in (i.e. overwhelmed with) affection at the sight of their children and with filial love

surging in them, they forgot their anger, and raising their children with their arms and embracing them, they smelt on the crowns of their heads and were enraptured.

34. Then the grown-up Gopas who felt extremely happy at the embrace of their children, withdrew slowly with a heavy heart from that place with tears gushing out at their memory.

35. Observing the intense longing and love growing every moment in the heart of Vraja (people and the cows) for their children (and calves), though weaned away from their mother's breast, Balarāma failed to understand its reason and began to think :

36. "It is really wonderful that the affection of the people of Vraja—and I am no exception to it—towards their children is increasing in intensity by leaps and bounds as never before, as it did in the case of Vāsudeva, the soul of the whole of the universe.

37. What infatuation is this ? Whence has it emerged ? Is this delusion caused by gods, men or demons ? Most probably it must be the deluding potency of my Lord and of none else, as it enchants even me (No other Māyā has this power of deluding me)".

38. Giving deep thought to the matter, Balarāma, of the Dāśārha clan, saw through his spiritual eye (lit. the eye of knowledge) that all the calves and his cowherd friends were the Lord Kṛṣṇa himself.

39.* (Balarāma asked Kṛṣṇa)—"These (cowherd boys) are not the rulers of gods. Nor are these (cows) the sages (as I know them to be). It is you who appear in these different forms. Be pleased to tell me, how all this took place." The Lord briefly explained which Balarāma could grasp correctly.

39A. *VR.'s text adds* :

(When Brahmā returned after hiding the cows and cowherd boys to *Satya loka*) Even Brahmā was disallowed by

*(1) *SS.* Balarama wanted to know how the Lord though one became many. Here SS. quotes *Tait-Up.* 2.5 *vijñānaṁ cāvijñānaṁ ca Satyaṁ cānṛtaṁ ca satyam abhavat.*

(2) *VR.* 'Be pleased to tell how you who are the one, came to be many.' Kṛṣṇa explained that as stated in the Vedas, He accomplished it through His Will. Balarāma came to understand it now.

his own doorkeepers who were deluded by Kṛṣṇa who assumed the four-faced form and occupied his (Brahmā's) seat in the *satyaloka*, and he had to go back.

40. When the self-born god (Brahmā) returned in a quarter of a moment or half (the time of winking of eyes) according to his measure of time which amounted to one human year, he saw Hari playing as before with all his companions, even at the end of the year.

41. "Whatever number of children there was in Gokula along with the calves—all of them are stupefied and lying in the bed of my Māyā-power and none of them has awakened.

42. Who are these and whence have they come as they are other than those who are under the spell of my deluding power ? They are the same in number and have been playing with Kṛṣṇa (Viṣṇu—the all-pervading Lord) for a period of one year.

43. Pondering for a long time on these differences (between children under his spell and those playing with Kṛṣṇa), the self-born god Brahmā could not, even with difficulty, distinguish between those (children and calves) who were real and who were not.

44. Thus in his attempt to delude Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa) who transcends all delusion, yet is deluding the whole universe, god Brahmā found himself enchanted by his own deluding capacity.

45. Just as the darkness caused by a drop of mist (becomes absorbed in the darkness of night, and like the light emitted by the fire-fly gets merged in the broad day-light, similarly lower type of *māyā* (deluding power) when used against a superior person loses its effectiveness and is lost to the user.

46. And Lo ! While god Brahmā was looking on, in a moment all the cowherds appeared dark as cloud in complexion and wearing silken yellow garments.

47. (They were) endowed with four arms wielding in each hand a conch, a discus, a mace and a lotus; (they were) wearing crowns, ear-rings. pearl-necklace and wreaths of sylvain flowers.

48. (They were) adorned with Śrī-vatsa (a curl of golden hair on the right bosom), armlets (*aṅgada*) and a pair of

bejeweled bracelets marked with three lines like conchs, on their wrists.

48A. *VR.'s text* :

With their chest beautified by *Śrī-vatsa* and with *kaustubha* gem-pendant round the neck, they appeared shining with anklets, bangles, girdles and rings.

49. All over their persons, from head to foot, they were beautified with wreaths of tender, fresh *Tulasī* offered to them by highly meritorious (devotees).

50. With their smiles bright like the moon-light (the whiteness of which represents the *sattva-guṇa*, whose function is the protection and preservation of the world) and with their side-long glances from their reddish eyes (the reddishness of which stands for the *rajo-guṇa* the function of which is the creation of the world), they looked like the creators and protectors of the desires of their votaries (they fulfilled whatever desire aroused in the heart of their devotees) with the help of *sattva* and *rajas*.[1]

51. They were adored severally by means of dancing, singing and offering many other courses of worship by all embodied beings, mobile and immobile, from Brahmā's own self to a clump of grass, all endowed with a corporeal form.

52. They were waited upon all around by mystic powers like *aṇimā* (power of becoming atomic in size) and by potencies such as Māyā, Vidyā and by twentyfour principles (enumerated by *Sāṅkhyas*) beginning with *Mahat* (—all assuming the forms of persons).

53. They were also attended upon by the Time-spirit[2] (which sets in motion the process of creation by disturbing the balance of the *guṇas* of *Prakṛti*), Nature, Saṁskāras (latent desires or proclivities), Desire (for enjoyment), Activity, the three *guṇas*—all assuming corporal forms, with their glories eclipsed by the Lord.

54. All of them were embodiments of the one absolute essence consisting of reality, knowledge and infinite bliss. Their

1. They appeared like Protectors with their white *sattva*-like smiles and shone with their reddish side-glances like creators by the reddish-*rajas guṇa*—ŚR.

2. C. *Kālaḥ svabhāvo niyatir yaddṛcchā* etc.—*ŚV. Up.* 1.2

greatness and glory were incomprehensible even to those who have obtained the vision of *Upaniṣadic* knowledge.

55. It was only once that Brahmā espied that all those forms were identical with the Supreme Brahman by whose light the universe both mobile and immobile, animate and inanimate stands revealed.[1]

56. Thereupon, when god Brahmā, out of great curiosity and wonder, directed his eyes elsewhere (towards himself or to his seat on the swan, he was so over-whelmed by the spiritual effulgence of the Lord that all his eleven sense-organs (five conative, five cognitive senses and the mind) became dazed and motionless; And he stood still and silent like a statuette of a secondary deity by the side of the presiding deity of that settlement (*Vraja*).

57. When Brahmā, the Lord of Sarasvatī (the goddess of learning) who was incapable of comprehending Lord Kṛṣṇa's (or the Supreme Brahman's) special glory and greatness, became confused about Brahman which is beyond the reach of logical reasoning, and is thus incomprehensible—Brahman which stands resplendent in its perfect bliss; is far above and beyond Māyā, and is unborn, and can be known only through the *Vedāntic* (*Upaniṣadic*) texts which describe It in the negative terms (*neti, neti*—'It is not so, It is not such'), and he could not even perceive the manifestation at all, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Unborn Lord immediately understood god Brahmā's perplexity, and drew off the curtain of his Māyā.

58. Thereupon god Brahmā whose vision to view the outside world was restored, opened his eyes with difficulties like a person brought back to life from death, and verily saw again this whole universe along with himself.

59. Immediately he cast his eyes around in all directions and found stretched before him the (vista of) Vṛndāvana forest abounding in trees providing the means of subsistence to people, and with desirable objects[2] (necessities of life) in plenty.

1. *tasya bhāsā sarvam idaṁ vibhāti—Muṇḍ. Up.* 2.2.10, *Śv. Up.* 6.14.

2. SS., VT. interpret 'samapriya' as :

(i) Vṛndāvana, Govardhana etc. Liked by Lord Kṛṣṇa or (ii) along with Lord Kṛṣṇa who was dear to goddess Lakṣmī (mā).

60. In that forest, men, deer and other animals who are (normally) inimical by nature, lived together as friends, and from which hatred, covetiouness (and other passions) had disappeared due to the presence of Kṛṣṇa.

61. (ŚR.) brings out the full significance of every attribute of Kṛṣṇa thus):

And Brahmā, the highest deity in the Universe, perceived the Lord acting before him the part of a child born in the family of cowherd—The Lord who, though without a second, was searching for calves, though absolutely one, was (trying to find) his friends (cowherd boys), though endowed with unfathomable knowledge, was attempting to search them (as if he did not know); though he was Infinite and omnipresent, he was looking around; though he was the Supreme Lord, he was behaving like a child, and though the Brahman himself, he held a morsel of food in his hand.

62. As soon as he beheld it, Brahmā hastily alighted from his mount (swan) and lay prostrate before him like a stuff of gold on the ground. Touching his pair of feet with the crest of his four crowns, he paid respects to him and bathed his feet with his holy tears of joy.

63. And repeatedly remembering the great glory of the Lord witnessed by him uptill now, he rose again and again to lay prostrate at his feet for a long time.

64. Thereupon, rising up gradually, he rubbed his eyes. Looking up intently at Hari but with a bent head, he folded his palms and with great humility and concentration of mind, he, with his body trembling with emotions and in a faltering voice, chanted the praise of the Lord.

# CHAPTER FOURTEEN

*God Brahmā eulogizes Kṛṣṇa*

*Brahmā said* :

1. I submit my eulogium unto you, Oh praiseworthy Lord (in the form of) the child of the cowherd Nanda—The Lord whose personality is dark-blue like a rainy cloud, in complexion; (who is) clad in silken garments refulgent like lightning; whose sublimely charming face appears glorious with ornaments of *Guñjā* seeds and a crest of peacock feathers; (who is) adorned with wreaths of sylvain foliage and flowers; whose splendid beauty is enhanced with a morsel of food (in the left hand), a cane and a horn (under left arm-pit) and flute and other emblems and whose feet are soft and tender.

2. Even though I am (god) Brahmā (the creator of the world), I am not really competent to comprehend even with my mind concentrated (inwardly) this corporeal form of yours which you have revealed to me for showering your Grace on me[1]—a form you assumed at your sweet will (or as desired by your devotees) but is not composed of elements[2] (gross or subtle). Much less can I comprehend directly you who (being transcendental to *guṇas*) are absolute bliss of The Self.[3]

3. Oh Lord ! Unconquerable as you are in the three

1. *SS.* It is impossible for me to comprehend any form you assume in your incarnations, and the greatness of your attributes, unless you, who are the absolute truth, bliss and consciousness condescend to enable me to do so, out of grace.

2. *ŚN.* (Śrīnivāsa-Sūri)—A follower of Rāmānuja :—The personality of the Supreme Self (God) is never composed of elements :

*na bhūta-saṅgha-saṁsthāno dehosya paramātmanaḥ* / quotes Śrīnivāsa-Sūri (ŚN). It is through His Grace that His all-pervading sentient-cum-nonsentient personality can be grasped with pure mind.

3. *VB and GD.* : Eulogy is the description of greatness. But even though you, out of grace unto me, have assumed this form, it is impossible for me to comprehend even this, with all the capacity of pure mind concentrated within. Need it be told that it is impossible for me to comprehend the greatness of your self of absolute existence, consciousness and bliss.

worlds, you appear conquered by those (devotees) who giving up all efforts in attaining knowledge, lead their life reverentially paying their respects with their body, speech and mind, to your stories (spontaneously recounted by the righteous), as they come to their ears without leaving their homes (but by remaining in the company of those pious devotees). (What is the propriety in exerting for knowledge ?)

4*. Nothing else but sheer exertions only like those who engage themselves in pounding merely the outer husk of grains (which contains no grains and as such yield no food-grains at all by this labour of pounding), is the resultant lot of those who, neglecting the path of devotion which is the fountain head of all blessings in the form of material prosperity here and liberation from *Saṁsāra* hereafter, undergo troubles to attain mere knowledge only, Oh Omnipresent Lord !

5. Oh Infinite Lord ! In days of old, in this (very) world, a number of *yogins* (who failed to attain spiritual wisdom by the path of *yoga*) dedicated all their desires and activities unto you, and obtained the knowledge of their self only through Devotion awakened in them by the resignation of their activities and desires (to you), and by virtue of listening to your stories, and thus they easily attained to your Supreme Nature (Godhead), Oh Acyuta.

6. It is, however, possible, Oh Almighty Lord, to comprehend your glory properly by the pure-souled ones (who have thoroughly controlled their senses) through their personal realization of the self, who is above modifications and

* (i) *SS.*, *VR.*, *SN.* The pursuit of the Self by following the path of knowledge (brushing aside the path of devotion) results in nothing but more afflictions as stated in BG 12.5:

*Kleśo'dhika-taras teṣām avyaktāsakta-cetasām /*

(ii) *VB.* : Bhakti (Devotion) is like the Wish-yielding-gem (*Cintāmaṇi*). It confers knowledge of the self as well. But mere pursuit of self-knowledge is sheer affliction and does not bear any fruit (*Kleśayuktaḥ, na tu phalayuktaḥ*). It does not yield secondary or unessential fruit or even incidental (*prāsaṅgika*) fruit.

(iii) KD. interprets *bhakti* (devotion) as *abheda bhakti* (in which the distinction between the devotee and God disappears). *Bhakti* itself is the essential knowledge (*Bhakti teci mukhya Jñāna*), and people reached *nirvāṇa* (Liberation) through *bhakti* only (14.4.31-89)

transcends all forms, for it is self-illuminating (and as such is beyond objective perception in 'this—that relation') and not by any other way.

7. Has anyone ever been able even to calculate (and estimate) your attributes when you are verily their actual support and controller—especially when you have incarnated for the well-being of the universe by manifesting innumerable qualities? Nobody, even if he be so exceptionally competent and clever as to count minutely all the particles of the (dust on the) earth, or the dew-drops in the sky, or the luminous particles in the rays of the sun, in a span of many births.[1]

8. He who, eagerly and anxiously waiting for your compassion and grace, experiences (in a detached manner), the fruits of his (past) actions and leads a life of complete reverential submission unto you, in thought word and deed, becomes a partner in the State of Liberation[2] (as if it is his ancestral property).

9. Oh Almighty Lord ! Look at this wicked foolhardiness of mine. Extremely insignificant as I am (before you of whom I am born) like a flame of fire emanating from (the universe consuming) conflagration, I, with a view to see the exhibition of my magnificent grandeur, tried to cover (delude) even you with my *māyā* when you are the Infinite, Eternal, Supreme Self, the Deluder of the deluders.

10. Hence, Oh Imperishable Lord, be pleased to forgive me who am born of *rajas* and therefore steeped in ignorance. Under the false notion that I am the real Supreme Ruler independent of you, I became blind by my arrogant ignorance of being the real birthless creator of the universe. Therefore this person (I, Brahmā) may please be regarded as deserving your grace (pity) as he (I) has a protector in you.

11. What am I after all, but an insignificant being invested with a body of seven spans (according to my humble

1. Cf. *Yo vā Anantasya guṇān anantān /*
*anu-kramiṣyan sa tu bāla-buddhiḥ //*
*rajāṁsi bhūmer gaṇayet kathañcit /*
*Kālena naivākhila-śakti-dhāmnaḥ //*
KD—*Sukalpa*—Span of life extending over innumerable births.
14.7.264

2. J.G.B. (*JG.'s Bṛhatkrama-sandarbha*):
Become an attendant (*pārṣada*) of Viṣṇu in this very life.

measure), and confined in a momentary perishable small pot-like egg called the world, covered with the sheaths of *tamas* i.e. *Prakṛti* (Primordial matter), *mahat* (cosmic intelligence), *ahaṁkāra* (cosmic ego), elements like the ether, air, fire, water and earth? How infinitely great is your glory?[1] The pores (of the skin) of whose body are like ventilators through which innumerable egg-like universes (each as big as mine) flow in and out like atoms. How can I stand any comparison with you? (Being extremely insignificant, compassion may kindly be shown to me of your own accord (Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Bṛhat Toṣaṇi*).

12. Oh Lord, transcendental to sense perception![1] Does the raising of feet by the foetus become an offence against the mother? (No. On the contrary the mother is happy to feel that the child in her is alive and kicking. Hence whatever has been committed by me, does not constitute an offence). Is there anything described as being existent or non-existent outside your bowels?[2] (It behoves you to forgive all my offences with a motherly affection, as you have announced yourself (in BG.9.17) to be the father, mother and protector of the universe).

13. The traditional scriptural statement that Brahmā, the unborn god, was verily born of (lit. sprang from) the stalk of the lotus forming the umbilical cord of the navel of Nārāyaṇa lying on the cosmic waters of the deluge, caused by commingling all the seas, at the end of the three worlds, is not false. Am I not thus born of you Oh Lord?

14* Are you not Nārāyaṇa? Yes, you are Nārāyaṇa inasmuch as you are the soul of all embodied creatures, who

1. *Adhokṣaja* : As I owe all the power of my senses etc. to you, no act committed by me be taken as an offence—VT.

2. All the sentient and non-sentient universe born of you and ultimately is being absorbed in you, is insignificant like an atom and is within you—SS.

*This verse gives or rather implies different popular etymologies of 'Nārāyaṇa'. ŚR gives them as follows

*Nāraṁ Jīvasamūhaḥ, ayanam āśrayaḥ—*

thus form your dwelling place (and *nāra* means the aggregate of living beings). You are Nārāyaṇa as you are the Lord who preside over and promote life in all beings, and being the witness to the entire universe, you alone know them all. You are the Nārāyaṇa—the Deity that abide in (and thus are the basis) of all the twenty-four principles evolved out of Nara, as well as waters—your abode for reposing, which is the evolute of Nara who is also your part. Even your reposing on water is also not true, but your *māyā*, as your form is indiscernible.

15. (Your form is beyond accurate determination or ascertainment, for) If your form which is the basic support of the world, reposed on cosmic waters in reality, how is it that I could not see it at that time when I tried for one hundred years to explore through the lotus-stalk out of which I came, (the source of my birth), Oh Lord of inconceivable power. Or why

(i) *Nāra*—aggregate of all beings; *ayanam*—abode. Hence one who dwells in all bodies as their soul.

(ii) *Nārasya ayanam pravṛttiḥ*—The source of the Promoter of all the aggregate of *jīvas*.

(iii) *Nāram ayase*—You know the aggregate of all beings. ay—to know.

(iv) Nāra—that which is produced from Nara.

Nāra—water. Nārāyaṇa is one who dwells in or reposes on water.

The above etymologies are supported by SS., VR. etc. SN. quotes the following verses in support of the above etymologies.

*nārāṇām ayanatvācca Nārāyaṇa iti smṛtaḥ /*
*nāra-śabdena jīvānāṁ samūhaḥ procyate budhaiḥ//*
*teṣām ayana-bhūtatvān Nārāyaṇa iti smṛtaḥ /*
*nāro narāṇāṁ saṅghātas tasyāham ayanaṁ gatiḥ /*
*tenāsmi munibhir nityaṁ Nārāyaṇa iti smṛtaḥ //*
*cetanā'cetanaṁ sarvaṁ Viṣṇor yad vyatiricyate /*
*nāraṁ tadayanaṁ cedaṁ yasya Nārāyaṇas tu saḥ //*

*VT.* states that God's reposing on cosmic water is not illusory (*māyika*), because it, being a sportive act (*līlā*) of God, is real.

*SG.* explains, god Brahmā was so over-whelmed with the spiritual feat (of assuming the form of calves, cowherd boys etc.) that he regarded Lord Kṛṣṇa as greater than Nārāyaṇa, "Oh Kṛṣṇa you are not Nārāyaṇa, Oh Lord of the totality of Brahmāṇḍas (all the universe) is only your part or a ray ?"

According to SG. Kṛṣṇa is the real, complete Supreme Person (*Kṛṣṇas tu pūrṇa puruṣottamaḥ*)

was it that it became clearly visible to me in my heart when I performed severe penance and why was it that it instantly disappeared.[1]

16. It is here only in this your incarnation (as Kṛṣṇa) that you have clearly demonstrated the illusory nature of this entire external universe to your mother, by manifesting it completely in your abdomen, Oh dispeller of Māyā.

17. Just as this entire universe including yourself appears present in your bowels, it is also manifested the same way even outside your bowels. Is this (double manifestation) possible except through your deluding potency.

18. Has not the illusive nature of this universe with the exception of your own self, been demonstrated to me by you even today?—At first (before I stole away the calves and the cowherd boys from Vraja) you were one. Then you assumed the forms of all your friends and calves from Vraja. You then revealed yourself in as many four-armed forms which were worshipped by all as well as by me. Then you became as many universes. You still remain the sole same Infinite Brahman without any second.[2]

19. To persons who are ignorant of your real nature,[3] you, the all-pervading Lord abide in *Prakṛti* and you spread your Māyā at your free will, and appear (though one as many) as if you are myself (i.e. god Brahmā) at the creation of the Universe,

1. VB : As I am your son the parental relation requires mutual sights. How is it that I could not see you often ?

2. V.B. In the ultimate analysis nothing but Brahman without a second remains and nothing else.

SG. The forms of calves and cowherd boys assumed by you were not illusory. Although whatever forms you manifested were discernible as separate, you are the second-less Brahman who baffle (all attempts at) discernment. What remains is your own self, the Brahman characterised by Truth, Knowledge, infinite Bliss.

3. JG.—Those who do not comprehend your greatness call this all as Māyā and not the working of your yogic power which is indescribable. The process of creation, protection or destruction of the world or assumption of the forms of calves and cowherds is not jugglery or *Māyā*, but your real sport at your free will.

*Padavī*—The path of devotion (SG., VC.) and *anātmani*—'In the body.'

as yourself i.e. Viṣṇu for its protection, and as the three-eyed god Śiva, at the time of the dissolution of the universe.

20. Oh Creator and Controller of the Universe ! Unborn as you are, you incarnate among gods (e.g. Vāmana), sages (e.g. Vyāsa), as well as among men (e.g. Rāma and Kṛṣṇa), sub-human beings (e.g. beasts as in the Boar incarnation) and acquatic animals (the Fish and Tortoise incarnations) for subduing the pride of the wicked, and showering grace on the righteous and saintly people[1], Oh Lord !

21. Oh Supreme Lord ! The receptacle of infinite powers (like knowledge, power, energy etc.) ! The In-dweller in the hearts of all ! Who knows (or is capable of knowing) the nature, time, place, extent of your sportive acts in which you indulge, after spreading out (exhibiting) your Yogic (deluding) Potency, in these three worlds, Oh Master of Yoga.

22. Hence, though this entire world which is of unreal nature like dream-experience, devoid of intelligence and full of endless, innumerable miseries, appears and disappears in You who are infinite, eternal bliss and knowledge *incarnate*, and through Māyā it seems to be real and possessing your characteristics.

23. You are the only one Self (*ātman*) abiding in the bodies of living beings, the ancient-most, real, self-refulgent, infinite, first and foremost, eternal, imperishable person of unobstructed blissfulness, untainted (by any blemish or Māyā), perfect, without any second, free from limitations and immortal.

24. Those who, through correct *upaniṣadic* mystic vision obtained from the sun-like spiritual preceptors, properly comprehend you as being of the above description, as the self-abiding in all beings, and as their own soul, easily cross this ocean of *Saṁsāra* (metem-psychosis) which is (as a matter of fact) unreal.

25. In the case of those who do not comprehend the *ātman* (The Self) in its essential nature, the entire world or *Saṁsāra* is created due to this lack of understanding. But

1.

*Pari-trāṇāya sādhūnāṃ vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām /*
*dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge //*

—BG.4.8

through realization and enlightenment (about his nature) the *saṁsāra* disappears again, as the appearance and disappearance of the body of a serpent (super-imposed through ignorance) on a rope (does before and after realization of the real nature of the rope).

26. The bondage of *saṁsāra* and Liberation from it, are terms which, as a matter of fact, are instituted through ignorance. They are not separate entities distinct from the reality characterised by truth and knowledge. When considered against the background of the absolute transcendental *Paramātman* of eternal consciousness, they cease to have separate existence, as do the day and night in the (sphere of the) sun.

27. How pitiable is the ignorance of these ignorant people that they consider you, their real self, as other (different from themselves), and their body as their very self. And thus they think that their real self is to be searched for outside in external objects.

28. Oh Infinite Lord ! Righteous people really seek you within the body (which is composed of matter and the spirit), by discarding that which is 'Not-that' (non-self). Can pious men of accurate judgement arrive at that correct conclusion, that the rope lying near (which was mistaken for a serpent) is certainly a rope, unless they have negated the wrong super-imposition of a serpent over that rope (through ignorance).

29. It is, however, he (your devotee) who is blest with the slightest grace of the pair of your lotus-like feet, who understands the real nature of the glory and power of the Lord, and not a person who is searching for it for a long time (but has not been favoured with your Grace), Oh Lord !

30. Oh Protector (of the universe) ! May I be blessed with that great luck, whereby in this very life (of Brahmā) or in any other birth, even in sub-human beings, I shall be one of your devotees, and serve your foliage-like tender feet ?

31. Oh ! How highly blessed are the cows and women of Vraja, the nectarine milk from whose udders and breasts is sucked with extreme delight (and satisfaction) by you in the form of calves and (cowherd) boys, Oh ! Omnipresent Lord, to whom even sacred sacrifices have not been able to give gratification (to that extent) even till today.

32. How surprisingly admirable (and enviable) is the good luck of Nanda and the cowherds of Vraja, that they have a friend in you, the eternal perfect Brahman, the embodiment of the highest bliss.

33. (As it is simply beyond the capacity of anyone to describe it) let the greatness of the fortune of these cowherds be kept aside for the time being. But we eleven[1]-god Śiva and others (the presiding deities of sense-organs) are exceptionally fortunate, for, through the *cups* in the form of the sense-organs (of these cowherds), we constantly drink the exhilarating and inebriating sweet nectar-like honey of your lotus-feet, (How much more blessed are the cowherds of Vraja who can enjoy your personal charms through all their senses, if our single organ medium is so enchanting !).

34. It will be an exceedingly high fortune to be born in any species (even as humble grass) here, in this forest (of Vṛndāvana), especially in Gokula, where one may have the (good luck) of bathing (from head to foot, all over the body) in the dust of the feet of any one (of the devoted inhabitants) from Gokula; for their entire life is the Lord Mukunda Himself, the dust of whose feet is still sought after by the Vedas.

35. As Pūtanā merely through her assumption of the guise of the good (pretending motherly affection to you) was brought to your region along with the members of her family, our mind is baffled in trying to guess what fruit other than yourself, the highest possible reward in the world, you can confer on these residents of Vraja whose homes, wealth, friends, beloved relatives, their selves, sons, life and mind are completely dedicated to you (and are meant for you), Oh Lord.

36. Oh Lord Kṛṣṇa ! So long as people do not become yours (your votaries), passions like desire, hatred etc. act as

1. ŚR gives the following list of organs presided over by deities. The mind (the moon god), *buddhi*—intellect (Brahmā), *ahaṁkāra*—ego (Śiva), the auditory sense (*dig-devatā*—deities presiding over the cardinal points), the tactile sense (Vāyu—the wind god), the sight (the sun gods) the sense of taste (Varuṇa—the Lord of waters), the olfactory sense (Aśvinī Kumāras), organ of speech (Agni—the fire god), hands (Indra), feet (Upendra). The organs of excretion and urination seem to have been excluded in the *Bhāgavata* verse and the inclusion of god Brahmā and Śiva are substituted to make up the number eleven.

thieves (to deprive them of their merits or spiritual wealth) and the house serves as a prison and infatuation works as fetters.

37. Oh Lord ! Even though you are transcendental to the world and as such have nothing to do with the worldly life, you play your role in this (worldly) life for enhancing the rapturous joy of people who have submitted to you for resort.

38. I have nothing to say about those who (pose that they) know you. Let them. (In fact, they are deluded in thinking that way). But as far as I am concerned, your glory is beyond the ken of my mind, body (senses) and speech.

39. Oh Kṛṣṇa ! Be pleased to grant me leave (to depart). You know everything, Oh Omniscient Lord. You are the protector of the world. This world and this person (both of which I wrongly regarded as mine) are now offered to you.

40. My respectful obeisance to the end of this Kalpa (the duration of my life) to you, Oh Lord Kṛṣṇa who cause delight to the lotus (in the form) of Vṛṣṇi clan, who bring flow-tide to the sea in the form (i.e. enhance the prosperity) of the earth, gods, Brāhmaṇas and the cows; the dispeller of the darkness of the pseudo-religious hypocrites, the destroyer of the demons on the earth and adorable to gods (right) from the sun.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

41.* After offering his hymn in praise of the Supreme Lord in this way, god Brahmā (the creator of the Universe) circumambulated him thrice (out of respect), and bowing down to his feet, he returned to his region which is adorable to and desired by all.

42. The Lord granted permission to god Brahmā who was born of him (and was therefore, pardoned his audacity to test the Lord). He brought back the (original) calves to the sandy bank of his choice (for the common dinner with the cow-herd boys in that picnic) where his companions were (already waiting) as before.

*VT. notes that Kṛṣṇa by his silence, refused god Brahmā's request to stay in his vicinity and indicated that one must execute one's prescribed duties during the tenure of his office—

*yāvad adhikāram avasthitir adhikāriṇām*

43. Though the children were separated from Kṛṣṇa, the very lord of their life, for one complete year, they thought it to be only half a moment due to the effect of the illusive power of Kṛṣṇa, Oh king.

44. What do they not forget in this world when the mind is infatuated with the Māyā Potency of the Lord ? The whole world under its deluding influence often forgets itself.

45. His companions greeted Kṛṣṇa, "Welcome for your speedy return. Not a single morsel has been eaten by us (during your absence). Have a hearty meal."

46. Laughing (loudly at the welcome) Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of sense organs, had his meal with the cowherd boys. He showed them the skin of the boa-constrictor, and returned to Vraja from the forest.

47. With person attractively decorated with peacock feathers, flowers and variegated mineral colours and exultant at the fanfare of the transporting sounds of flutes whistles of leaves and horns that were loudly blown, and shouting at the calves while tending them, Kṛṣṇa whose looks brought delight to the eyes of the cowherd women,[1] entered Vraja, while his companions singing his hallowing glory, followed him.

48. The children sang in Vraja : "By this child, the delight of Yośodā, a big serpent was killed today and we were saved from it".

*King Parīkṣit enquired* :

49. Oh Brahman sage ! Be pleased to explain to me how was this unbounded abundance of love which was never before exhibited (by the inhabitants of Vraja) even to the children born to them, was possible in the case of Kṛṣṇa who was born of another.[2]

1. SG., as an alternate explanation, introduces Rādhā here. *yad vā Śrī-Kṛṣṇaika-priyāyā bhagavatyāḥ Śrī Rādhādevyāḥ tan netrāṇām eva viśeṣatas taddarśanotsavasiddheḥ|*

2. vide Supra 13.26.

*Śrī Śuka explained* :

50.* Oh King ! One's own self (*ātman*)[1] is the most beloved to all created beings. Others such as children, wealth etc. are dear, because they are beloved to the self.

51** One does not cherish that much love to one's progeny, wealth, house etc. which (being dependent on their feeling of mine-ness) is called their own, as one has for one's body (which is identified with the self), by all embodied beings, Oh Great King.

52. To persons who believe in the identity of the body and the (indwelling) Soul, their own body is the dearest to them and not so much the children etc. which come after it (or are connected with it), Oh best of Kṣattriyas.

53. (If, instead of believing in the one-ness of the body with the soul) this body shares the feeling of 'mine-ness' (is regarded as different from the soul yet 'mine') it would not be so intensely loved as the soul itself. For when this body is being worn out, the desire to live grows stronger.[2]

54. Hence one's own self is the most beloved to all embodied beings. It is for the sake of the Self that all this world mobile and immobile, exists.

55. Do you know that this Kṛṣṇa is the soul of all embodied beings. It is for the good of the world that he, through his Māyā power, appears to have assumed a corporal form.

56. To those who know the Reality, everything mobile and immobile in this world, is Kṛṣṇa.[3] Everything is the

1. VR. *ātman*=The Supreme Self.

* For vv. 50-54 cf. *na vā are patyuḥ Kāmāya patiḥ priyo bhavati / ātmanas tu kāmāya patiḥ priyo bhavati/* etc.—*Bṛhad. Upa.* 2.4.5.

** *VB.* The feeling of love for one's own body, due to the 'I'ness attributed to it by these who identify the body with the soul, is stronger than that (which one feels) for one's progeny or wealth with which 'mine-ness' is associated.

2. SG. and VT. read: *jīvitāśā abalīyasī*: The desire to live is not so strong as the person's ego is eliminated through discriminatory (philosophical) thinking.

3. SS. quotes *tad-ananyatvam-ārambhaṇa-śabdādibhyaḥ* BR. S.2.1.15) (0.14 according to Śaṅkara) in support of Kṛṣṇa's person comprising everything sentient and non-sentient in the universe.

Also cf. Infra 11.2.41.

manifestation of the the Almighty Lord and there is nothing else (than he).

57. Of all things that exist, their essence lies in their cause and Lord Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate cause of all these causes. Hence, tell me if there is anything apart from him.

58. To those who resort to the boat in the form of the foliage like tender feet of Kṛṣṇa, (the slayer of demon Mura) of hallowing reputation—the final abode of the great (sages) (saints etc.)—the ocean of *saṁsāra* is as shallow as the footprint of a calf. They attain to the highest region (vaikuṇṭha) from which they never revert to the Saṁsāra, the region of miseries.

59. Whatever I have been asked by you here as to show what was done by Hari in his stage as a child was proclaimed broadcast in his boyhood, has been completely narrated to you.

60. By listening to or by glorifying how Lord Kṛṣṇa (The Slayer of demon Mura) played with his chums, his slaying of the demon Agha, his repast on the meadow, his assumption of non-phenomenal forms and the sublime hymn of praise sung by god Brahmā, a person attains everything that he desires.

61. In this way, they both (Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma) passed their childhood at Vraja, in child-like sports such as hide-and-seek, playful construction of dams, jumping like monkey (from one branch of a tree to another).

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### *Slaying the demon Dhenuka*

*Śrī Śuka continued* :

1. And after attaining the *pauganḍa* stage (boyhood from the age of six to nine), those two brothers (Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa) were approved (by Nanda and others) as suitable for the job of tending the cows[1]. While grazing the cows and their

1. VT. quotes *Padma P.* which states that during their childhood, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma tended calves. On their attainment of the sixth year, from the 8th day of the bright half of Kārttika, they became *bona fide* cow tenders. Hence that day is now known as *Gopāṣṭamī*.

calves in company of their friends, they rendered the region of Vṛndāvana extremely sacred, by their foot-prints.[1]

2. On one occasion, playing on his own flute, accompanied by Balarāma and surrounded by cowherds singing his glory, Mādhava (Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Lakṣmī as well as the spring) tending his herd of kine in front of him, and desirous of indulging in sports, entered a forest blossoming with flowers and affording a good pasture suitable to the cattle.

3. Observing that the (Vṛndāvana) forest was resounded with the sweet notes, sound and humming of birds, beasts (or deer) and bees, and was wafted with a breeze cool due to its contact with pools with waters translucent like (the pure) minds of the great, and fragrant with lotuses, the Lord set his heart to play there.

4. Perceiving at every place, trees glowing with the beauty of reddish foliage and touching their feet with their heads—top branches—heavy with a burden of fruits and flowers, Kṛṣṇa, the Primeval Person, slightly smiled out of delight, and addressed his elder brother.

*The glorious Lord said* :

5. Oh ! How wonderful ! Carrying the presents of fruits and flowers on their heads (top branches), these trees bow down their heads (branches) laden heavily with fruits to your lotus-feet which are adored by the immortals, with a view to absolve themselves of the sin or ignorance (*tamas*)[2] which caused their birth as trees, Oh prominent God.

6. These (humming) bees, singing your glory that purifies all the world, are resorting to you at every step—you the Ancient-most Person. Most probably, these are the hosts of sages who

*Śuklāṣṭamī Kārttikasya smṛtā Gopāṣṭamī budhaiḥ /*
*taddinād Vāsudevo' bhūd gopaḥ purvaṁ tu vatsapaḥ //*

1. Cowherds used to go bare-footed. Hence the imprints of Kṛṣṇa's feet on the soil of Vṛndāvana—VT.

2. VT. argues that it was ignorance but they deliberately accepted birth as a tree in Vṛndāvana forest, as god Brahmā made a similar request in his prayer (Supra 14.34)

VB. regards these three verses 5, 6 and 7 as if prayers from the trees, bees, birds and beasts.

are prominent among devotees, and they do not let you miss—their personal Deity—even though you lie concealed in the (Vṛndāvana) forest, Oh sinless one!

7. On your arrival at their home, the peacocks are dancing joyously; the female deer, overwhelmed with joy are giving you delight with their oglings like unto cowherd women (of Vraja), and the flocks of cuckoos welcome you with their sweet cooing. Blessed are these forest-dwellers.[1] For such is the nature of the saintly persons.

8.* Blessed is the earth today; and also the blades of grass and plants touching your feet, and the trees and creepers gently pricked by your nails (to pluck leaves or flowers), and the rivers, hills, birds and beasts that have been viewed at with kind looks, and the Gopa girls who are hugged to your bosom (between your arms) for which even the goddess of beauty, (Lakṣmī) longs.

9. Being delighted at least at the sight of Vṛndāvana (the beauty of which is described above), Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoyed himself along with his companions, while grazing the cows in the pastures on the river bank, in the vicinity of the (Govardhana) mount.

10. Adorned with garlands and accompanied by Balarāma (Saṅkarṣaṇa)[2], he used to burst out into singing in imitation of the sweet humming of bees intoxicated with the honey sucked by them, while his followers were extolling his feats in song.

11. Sometimes he imitated the rapturous notes of swans, and sometimes he danced mimicking the dancing peacocks, provoking his companions to laughter.

11-A. *Vṛndāvana edition adds*[3]

Sometimes he imitated the chattering of the parrots in

1. VJ. regards that words *śikhi & Kokila* also mean 'sages—one with matted hair', and the gods Brahmā (ka) Śiva (*u*) and others.

*This verse is No. 19 in VJ's Text (in which this ch. is No 13) and is spoken by Śrī Śuka.

2. *Saṅkarṣaṇa* is used to indicate that Balarāma being non-different from Kṛṣṇa, joined him in singing—VT.

3. P. 565 Footnote. Source not given but VT's text comments on this verse and not on V. 11 above.

sweet indistinct words. Sometimes he sweetly cooed in imitation of the warbling and cooing of cuckoos.

12. Sometimes, in a voice deep and sonorous like the rumbling of clouds, and extremely fascinating to the cows and cowherds (alike), he would affectionately call out (by names) cows that have strayed away to distant pastures.

13. He used to imitate the notes and cries of birds like *Cakora* (a fabulous bird subsisting on lunar rays), *Krauñca* (a curlew or heron), *cakravāka* (the ruddy goose), *Bhāradvāja* (a sky-lark) and also peacocks, and sometimes behaved or shrieked like animals terrified at tigers and lions.

14. Sometimes by shampooing his feet and rendering other services (like fanning), Kṛṣṇa would remove the fatigue of his elder brother, Balarāma, exhausted with playing, and lying with his head on the cushion-like lap of a cowherd boy.

15. Sometimes holding each other by hands, they (Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa) laughingly applauded the cowherd boys who were dancing, capering, singing, prattling and wrestling with each other.

16. At times, being exhausted with (physical) exertions in wrestling, he used to lie on different beds[1] of tender leaves (prepared by his companions) at the foot of trees, placing his head on the cushion-like laps of (elderly) cowherd-boys.

17. Some cowherd boys kneaded the feet of the great-souled Lord while other sinless ones fanned him with fans made of tender leaves.

18. Others whose hearts (lit. intellect) were steeped in love and devotion for him, sang gently and in sweet low tone beautiful songs suitable for the occasion, and pleasing to him (or songs pertaining to his feats), Oh Great King!

19. In this way, Kṛṣṇa, by his Māyā, had concealed his course (i.e. real divine nature) and played his *role* as a cowherd

1. VT. states that by His Māyā power, Kṛṣṇa lay on all the beds leading each group to believe that Kṛṣṇa was honouring the bed prepared by them.

VB. explains that Kṛṣṇa did so for the sages who were occupying the feet of trees and his beds were the heart of *yogins* where he lay and he showed his preference and respect to cowherd boys by placing his head on their laps.

boy by his acts (sports and behaviour). The Lord whose foliage-like tender feet were caressed by goddess Lakṣmī played like a rustic boy with rustics, though occasionally he behaved like the Almighty Lord.

20. A certain cowherd called Śrīdāman was a bosom friend of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa and so were other cowherd boys like Subala, Stoka. Kṛṣṇa spoke to them with friendly affection.

(VJ. reads : Śrīdāman spoke to Subala, Aśoka, Kṛṣṇa and other cowherds out of friendliness).

21. "Oh Rāma ! Balarāma of mighty arms ! Oh Kṛṣṇa, the destroyer of the wicked ! Not far from this place, there is a great dense forest thick with rows of palmyra trees.[1]

22. Abundant fruits lie fallen and have been falling there, but they are all monopolised by Dhenuka of wicked soul.

23. He is a demon of mighty prowess[2], Oh Rāma ! Oh Kṛṣṇa ! Assuming the form of a donkey, he lives surrounded by members of his tribe (donkeys), all of whom are equal in strength to him.

24. Being afraid of that cannibal who feeds on human beings, the tract of forest is not visited by men and is also avoided by herds of beasts and flocks of birds.

25. Very delicious and sweet smelling fruits untasted by us lie there. And it is the sweet fragrance of those fruits that has filled the air all around, and we perceive that here also.

26. Oh Kṛṣṇa ! Be pleased to give those to us whose hearts are enamoured of their odour. A very strong yearning urges us, Oh Rāma. We make a move if you approve of it.

27. Hearing the request of his friend and with a desire to accomplish their wishes, those two mighty gods laughed heartily, and proceeded to the Palm forest accompanied by the cowherds.

28. Balarāma entered the forest and by violently shaking the palm trees with his arms like a young elephant, he made the fruit drop down by his physical power.

1. VT. locates it with 'Tālasi' or 'Tāraphara'. It is to the southwest of Mathura at a distance of 8 miles from Govardhana.

2. v.l. *atitīvra*—of extremely ferocious nature—VJ

29. Hearing the sound of the falling of fruits, the Asura in the form of a donkey, rushed to the place making the earth along with mountains tremble and quake.

30. Rushing at Balarāma, the powerful demon kicked with his hind legs on the chest of Balarāma, and braying loudly the wicked fellow ran away to some distance. (moved hither and thither around Balarāma).

31. Approaching Balarāma again, the donkey stayed with its face away from Balarāma, and in violent wrath, he flung his hind legs (struck with his hind hoofs) Balarāma, Oh King !

32. Catching hold of both his legs with one hand, Balarāma violently whirled him and when the demon died due to that terrible whirling, he hurled him to the top of a tall palm tree.

33. Being struck (with the carcass of that donkey), the big palm tree with heavy (palm-fruit laden) head crashed, and shook heavily the adjoining tree which fell down, despatching its neighbouring tree to the same fate.

34. Being struck down by the impact of the dead body of the donkey which was sportively hurled by Balarāma, all the palm trees shook heavily, as if swept down by a violent hurricane.

35. This is not miraculous in the case of the glorious Lord Śeṣa (who incarnated as Balarāma) the Ruler of the universe, in whom the universe is woven warp and woof, like a piece of cloth into the threads, Oh dear child !

36. The whole tribe of Dhenuka, the donkeys which flung in rage due to the killing of their brother, dashed at Rāma and Kṛṣṇa.

37. As they attacked, both Rāma and Kṛṣṇa held them by their hind legs, and flung them easily to the tops of the tall palm trees, as if in sport.

38. Littered over with heaps of palm fruits, the tops of the palm trees, and the dead bodies of the demons, the surface of the earth looked like the sky overcast with clouds (red, white and blue in colours).

39. Hearing of their marvellous feat, gods and others (such as demigods, celestial damsels etc.) let down showers of

flowers on them, played on the divine musical instruments, and praised them highly.

40. Then the forest being thus rid of Dhenuka, people being free from fear, enjoyed (ate) to the full, fruits of those palm trees, and the cattle grazed in the pasture fearlessly.

41. Kṛṣṇa whose eyes were large like lotus-petals, and the hearing and singing of whose glory is hallowing and meritorious, entered Vraja along with his elder brother Balarāma, in company of his cowherd followers who were glorifying and praising him.

42. The cowherd women rushed out in crowds to welcome and see with eager eyes, Lord Kṛṣṇa, looking charming with sylvain flowers and peacock feathers adorning his curly locks of hair, overlaid with dust raised by (the hoofs of) cows, of beautiful eyes and bewitching smiles, and who was playing on his flute while followed by cowherds singing his glory.

43. Drinking with their black-bee-like eyes the honey (i.e. charm) in the lotus-like countenance of Mukunda (Kṛṣṇa), the damsels of Vṛaja got subsided their fever of separation from him during the day time. Kṛṣṇa, on his part, entered the cowpen after duly receiving their worship, welcome (consisting) of bashful smiles, ogling with side glances and modesty.

44. Yaśodā and Rohiṇī who were very fond and affectionate to their sons, poured their benedictions suitable to the occasion to their heart's content.

45. They whose fatigue of journey (while tending the cows) was removed by bath, massage etc. in the forest, were dressed in beautiful clothes, and were adorned with excellent garlands, perfumes (sandal paste) etc.

46. They partook of the sweet dish served to them by their mother, and after being caressed by them, they went to sleep in excellent beds, and enjoyed sweet, happy sleep at Vraja.

47. In this way, Lord Kṛṣṇa used to move in the Vṛndāvana. On one occasion, unaccompanied by Balarāma, but in company of (lit. surrounded by) his friends, he went to the Yamunā.

48. There, being tormented with the heat of the summer and oppressed with thirst, the cows as well as cowherds drank the river water polluted due to the contamination of poison.

49. Being deprived of their discretion and judgement by the Providence,[1] immediately after sipping the poisonous water, they all fell dead, by the side of the water[2], Oh best of Kurus.

50. Finding them verily reduced to that condition, Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the masters of Yoga, restored his *proteges* to life by his glance that (as if) showered nectar.

51. Recovering their consciousness immediately, all of them rose up from the brink of the water and gazed at each other with amazement.

52. They came to understand that their restoration to life after death by drinking poison was the result of the gracious look of Kṛṣṇa (Govinda), Oh King Parīkṣit.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

*Expulsion of Kāliya*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. Perceiving that the (waters of the) Kṛṣṇā (i.e. Yamunā) had been poisoned by a black serpent (Kāliya), the Almighty Kṛṣṇa, desirous of purifying it, expelled him (from that place).

*The King (Parīkṣit) asked* :

2. May it be kindly narrated to me as to how Lord Kṛṣṇa caught hold of (and subdued) the serpent in the interior of the unfathomable waters (of the Yamunā), and (secondly)

1. Those whose knowledge was affected by the power of the sportive activities of the glorious Lord—VT.

2. Jīva Gosvāmī, in *ṣaṭ-sandarbha* (in *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha*) explains that Gopas being attendants of the Lord did not die by the poisonous water. This is simply to show that they are human beings as the Lord behaved as a human incarnation.

*tad bhāgavata iva nara-lilaupāyikatayā prapañcitam iti mantavyam*

For details vide De—*Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement*, pp. 55-56. VJ. regards this a bit allegorical indicating that the poison of *saṁsāra* does not affect the devotees of Hari (vide Intro. to ch. 16).

a serpent is not an acquatic animal; how could he make his abode in the interior part of water for ages together, Oh learned Brāhmaṇa.[1]

3. Who will feel satiated while drinking the nectar of the noble deeds of the glorious omnipotent Lord of absolute free will, while he was acting his role as a cowherd, Oh Brāhmaṇa Sage ?

*Śrī Śuka said :*

4. In the Yamunā, there was a certain pool, the haunt of Kāliya, the waters whereof were boiling with the serpent's fiery poison and even the birds flying over it, fell dead (due to poisonous vapours).

5. Beings, mobile and immobile, on the banks of that river, succumbed to death at the touch of the wind charged with the poisonous spray, while blowing over the ripples of that deadly water.

6. Kṛṣṇa, whose incarnation was for the subjugation of the wicked, considered how the real power of the snake lay in its virulent venom and that it had polluted the river with its contamination. Climbing up a very tall *Kadamba* tree (on the bank of the Yamunā[2]), he tightened his girdle and striking his arms (as if challenging Kāliya to fight) jumped down into the poisonous water.

7. The pool of the serpent, the voluminous waters of which were swelled with venom discharged by the serpent, extremely agitated by the vehemence of the plunge of the Supreme Man, dashed up overflowing on all sides to a distance of hundred bows (i.e. four hundred *hastas* or cubits) in terrible

1. VT. supports this meaning of 'Vipra' by quoting Yājñavalkya—
*janmanā, Brāhmaṇo jñeyaḥ, saṁskārair dvija ucyate /*
*vidyayā yāti vipratvaṁ tribhiḥ śrotriya-lakṣaṇam //*

2. ŚR. & VR. explain that that Kadamba tree did not get dry by Kāliya's poison due to contact of nectar while Garuḍa was carrying it away from the custody of gods (Mbh. Adi. 33) VB. states that Garuḍa used to perch on it, waiting for Kāliya to come out so that he would kill it. The tree was thus preserved for Kṛṣṇa. VT. states it was Lord Kṛṣṇa's tree—as if identical with him (*Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-vṛkṣatvāt*) and was protected by Lord Kṛṣṇa for his sports.

waves saturated and bitter with poison. But there is nothing miraculous in this in the case of the Almighty Lord (of infinite strength).

8. Hearing the thunderous sound of water agitated by the strokes of the mighty arms (of the Lord) who was sporting with the prowess of a supreme powerful elephant, and perceiving it as an attack on his abode, and unable to tolerate it, the serpent (whose eyes functioned also as ears) advanced rustling against Kṛṣṇa, Oh dear King !

9. Biting him in all tender parts, twisting himself, he enclosed completely in his coils the Lord who looked extremely beautiful, delicate and effulgent like a cloud; (who) was adorned with *Śrīvatsa* mark and was dressed in raiment of bright golden hue; who, with a bewitching, smiling face and with feet tender like the pericarp of a lotus, was sporting (in the water) with absolute fearlessness.

10. On seeing Kṛṣṇa caught in the coils of the serpent and no movement of his being visible, his dearest chums, the cowherds, who had dedicated to him their own selves, their belongings, family and even desires, became extremely distressed, and dropped down with their minds maddened with grief, sorrow and fear in succession.

11. Fixing their gaze at Kṛṣṇa and extremely distressed cows, bulls and heifers began to bellow; they stood there as if weeping through fear.

12. And at Vraja, very ominous and terrible portents of three-fold character indicating imminent danger appeared on the earth (e.g. seismic disturbance), in the sky (e.g. raining of meteors or blood), and to persons (throbbing of the left-side in the case of men and right side in the case of women).

13. Noticing the evil omens and learning that Kṛṣṇa unaccompanied by Balarāma had left for grazing the cattle, the cowherds of whom Nanda was prominent, were overwhelmed with fear.

14. Being ignorant of the real (omnipotent) nature of Kṛṣṇa, they concluded from the omens, the death (or fatal calamity) of Kṛṣṇa. As they regarded him as their very life, and had set their hearts on him, they became submerged in grief, sorrow and fear.

15. Young and old, men and women who followed the vocation of cowherds (or were extremely affectionate) being eager to have a look at Kṛṣṇa, proceeded from Gokula in a sad melancholy mood.

16. Perceiving them so nervous and terrified, the glorious Lord Balarāma who knew the prowess of the younger brother, laughed heartily, but spoke nothing.

17. In search of their beloved Kṛṣṇa, they followed the track indicated by his foot-prints bearing the special marks of being the supreme Lord, and they reached the bank of the Yamunā.

18. On the way, and in between the foot-prints of cows and others, they carefully observed the foot-prints of the Lord characterised by the marks of a lotus, a barley seed, a goad, the thunder bolt and a banner, and they proceeded quickly, dear Parīkṣit.

19. Noticing from a distance Kṛṣṇa entwined in the coils of the serpent, and being merged motionless in water in the interior of the pool, and the cow-herds fallen in a swoon on the bank and the piteously lowing all around, they became sorely distressed, and lost their consciousness.

20. With their hearts deeply attached to the infinite Glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa, and cherishing the memory of his warm-hearted friendship, charming smile, meaningful glances and pleasing words, the Gopīs (cowherdesses) were extremely tormented with grief to find their most beloved (Kṛṣṇa) trapped in the coils of the serpent, and looked upon the three worlds bereft of their beloved, as totally desolate and interestless.

21. Shedding profusely tears of grief, the cowherdesses who were equally grieved like Yaśodā, closely held her back (from following Kṛṣṇa in the Pool as her heart followed her child. They were recounting the stories of Kṛṣṇa so beloved in Vraja. With their eyes riveted on the face of Kṛṣṇa, they stood there like lifeless bodies.

22. Noticing that Nanda and others whose very life was Kṛṣṇa, entering the pool of water, glorious Lord Balarāma who knew the prowess of Kṛṣṇa, prevented them from doing so.

23. Observing that the whole of his Gokula including women and children entirely depended on him for shelter and

was extremely grieved for his sake, Kṛṣṇa who followed the role of mortals, stayed for about a *muhūrta* a short while (about 48 minutes) in that entrapped condition, and emerged out of the coils of the serpent.

24. His body being oppressed by the (internal) pressure of the expanding dimensions of Kṛṣṇa's body, the enraged serpent freed Kṛṣṇa from his coils, and raised his hoods breathing out violently poison from his hissing nostrils, and was staring at him with eyes motionless yet hot like a frying pan, and mouth emitting flames of fire.

25. Like Garuḍa, the king of birds, watching for an opportunity (to pounce on his prey), Lord Kṛṣṇa sported with the serpent which was constantly licking the corners of its mouth with its forked tongue, and whose eyes sending forth extremely virulent poisonous (flames of) fire, and wheeling round the serpent, he made it whirl around itself.

26. When all the energy (and prowess) of the serpent became exhausted in whirling round itself, Kṛṣṇa, the First (Eternal) Person bent down its raised shoulders (i.e. neck, with his hands[1]), and mounted on its broad hood.[2] With his lotus feet extremely red and refulgent with their contact with the heaps of jewels on the heads of the serpent, the First Teacher of all arts[3] began to dance.

27. Observing that the Lord intends to dance and is about to commence it, all his (servants—celestial artists like) Gandharvas, Siddhas, gods, Cāraṇas, heavenly damsels (*apsarās*)[4] suddenly, promptly and with loving devotion presented them-

1. *Śiraḥ sa Kṛṣṇo jagrāha*
*Svahastenā'vanamya ca—Harivaṁśa*, quoted by VT., VC also VB.

2. VB. raises the question how the Holy Lord rode on an inauspicious reptile and replies that firstly, being the creator of all, the problem of inauspiciousness does not arise, and secondly, He is habituated to sleep on a serpent (Śeṣa) as (*Śeṣa-śāyī*)

3. v.l.—*amṛta-Kalādhi-guruḥ*—VJ. who is the Supreme Master of the moon of nectarine rays.

4. VB.—The following are the functions of the celestials on such occasions : *Gandharvas*, to sing; *Siddhas*, to shower flowers; sages, to compose hymns of praise; *Cāraṇas*, to play on musical instruments and *apsarās* celestial damsels to dance. But the procedure of dancing viz. *Nāndī*, followed by scattering of flowers etc. was upset by the suddenness of the Lord's decision to dance.

selves there with drums, tabors and musical instruments, flowers, singing the songs of his praise.

28. Dear Parīkṣit ! During the course of dancing (at every beat), the Lord who wields a rod to punish the wicked, struck down and scalped with the stroke[1] (so that the next kick in the dancing beat should be more painful) the unbending hood of the hundred and one hooded serpent which was whirling round and round, and was on the point of death. Profusely vomitting blood through his nostrils and mouths, the serpent became utterly depressed in spirits.

29. During the course of his dance, Kṛṣṇa kicked and bent down whatever head (hood of the serpent) was raised by the serpent that was profusely emitting poison through its eyes, and was hissing (through nostrils) with rage, and thus subdued it. Looking upon him as the Most Ancient Person (Lord Nārāyaṇa on the bed of the coiled body of Śeṣa), he was devoutly worshipped with (the showers of) flowers (by Gandharvas).

30. With its umbrella-like hoods being crushed and wounded by the violent and unearthly dance, and vomitting blood profusely out of its mouth, the serpent, all the limbs of whose body were shattered[2], remembered the Ancient Person Nārāyaṇa, the Father (Creator) of the mobile and immobile creation, and mentally resorted to him for refuge.

31. Finding their serpent-husband collapsing under the infinite weight of Kṛṣṇa carrying (innumerable) worlds in his abdomen, and his umbrella-like hoods crushed and shattered under the strokes of his heels, its distressed wives with dishevelled hair and clothes and ornaments in disorder approached him.

32. Being overwhelmed with anxiety (for their husband) the wives of Kāliya, holding their babies[3] in their hands in

1. V.B. *Kiṁcana prahāra-mātraṁ karoti, Kiṁ tu mamarda —pādena mardanam api karoti, yathoparatāni tvag gacchati, dvitīyaprahāre adhikavyathā—jananāstham/*

2. VB : crushing of hoods etc. is the expiation of external sins and vomitting blood is absolving of internal sins. When both types of sins were purged, Kāliya remembered God.

3. v.l. *puraskṛtārhāḥ*—Who have already worshipped him (*agre kṛta-pūjanāḥ*)—VJ.

front of them, prostrated themselves on the ground[1] before the Lord, the Creator of all beings. With an earnest desire to absolve their husband from sin, and to secure the deliverance of their sinning husband from the hands of the Supreme Lord (also), the pious ladies folded their palms, and sought asylum in him who affords protection to all.

*The serpent's wives submitted* :*

33. "As your incarnation is intended for the chastisement of the wicked (and for showering Grace on the righteous[2]), the punishment meted out to this (Kāliya) who has committed sinful acts, is quite just. You entertain equal impartial outlook and attitude towards your enemy as well as to your sons. It is with a view to confer good fruit (or your Grace, or Eternal Happiness) that you inflict punishment[3] (proportionate to the nature of the offence.)

34. As a matter of fact, the punishment inflicted (on Kāliya) is a blessing and a favour (in disguise), conferred on us all, for your chastisement of the wicked absolves them of their sins. Your wrath is regarded (by us) as a blessing and a favour bestowed (by you), as it destroyed all the sins of this embodied being (Kāliya) whose state of being a serpent was due to those sins.

35. (We really marvel) how great austere penance (as per correct procedure) must have been practised in former life by Kāliya, himself remaining free from pride, and giving due respect to others, or what righteous acts out of compassion to

1. VT. states that there was a small island in the middle of Kāliya's pool in the Yamunā.

*ŚR states the analysis of this panegyric as follows:

(1) Acquiescence in the punishment meted out to Kāliya (6 verses).

(2) Hari's praise (10 verses), (3) Prayer to Lord Hari (5 verses). VB's analysis is slightly different.

*KD.* shows that five characteristics of peaceful negotiations (*sāma*) are seen in the appeal of Kāliya's wives as follows (1) Relation of Just punishment proportionate to offence (*sambandha*) V. 34; (2) Benefit: *lābha* v. 35; (3) obligation—*upakṛti*, v. 36; (4) Non-difference v. 37-8; (5) Praise of virtues—*guṇakīrtana* Vv. 39ff.

2. Otherwise your incarnation will be of a negative character—VT.

3. *SS.*—Even your wrath is a form of your Grace.*

all beings, must have been performed by him then, that you, who support the life of all, have been pleased with him.

36. We simply cannot understand what meritorious acts entitled him to the privilege of touching the dust of your feet, with a desire to receive which, the most charming goddess Lakṣmī, giving up all pleasures, performed austere penance for a long time, observing strict vows, Oh Gracious Lord!

37. Those who have attained the dust at his (the Lord's) feet, do not covet for (a life in) the celestial regions, or the position of the sovereignty over the whole of this world, or the post of god Brahmā, or the rulership of the subterranean regions, or mastery over the mystic powers secured through *yoga*, or the Liberation from *saṁsāra* whence there is no return (to *saṁsāra*).

38* Oh Lord ! Though this serpent-king is born of *tamas* (viz. of the ignorant race of serpents), and is of wrathful nature, he could attain ('the bliss of being favoured with the dust of your feet' 'the touch of your feet' 'the direct visualization of your person') that which is attainable to others only with great difficulty and by desiring to secure which, corporeal beings whirling on the wheel of *saṁsāra*, realize all desirable prosperity including liberation from *saṁsāra*.

39** Salutations to You, the Almighty Lord of incomprehensible excellences, the dweller in the bodies of all beings (as Their Inner Controller), yet undiscernible (or All-pervader). You are the support of all elements like the sky (the wind, water etc.), or the abode of all beings. You are eternally existent as cause of all, but are transcendental to causal relation[1].

40. As the treasure house (or the source) of all knowledge and consciousness, you are perfectly full of them. You are the *Brahman* of infinite power, devoid of (and transcendental to) all attributes and immutable, the regulator and motivator of

*KD. : By riding over the heads of our husband, you became his crest-jewel and in a way both of you became one. Nay, our husband became in a way superior to the Lord who became a head-ornament of Kāliya. This is the *abheda*—(identity) stage in *sāman* (pacific measures or negotiations)

—10.16.499-504.

**The next ten verses form the *guṇa-kīrtana* (eulogy of excellences), the next stage is *sāman* (peaceful negotiations)—KD.

1. *Kāraṇātītāya* (ŚR)

*Prakṛti* (or possessor of Supernatural Potencies). We bow to you.

41. (We pay obeisance to) you who are the (very embodiment of) Time-Spirit[1], the support of (the potencies of) Time, the witness to different divisions of Time; you are the universe itself as well as its Director[2], creator as well as its (material and instrumental) cause.

42. Hail to you who constitute all the elements[3] (both gross and subtle), all the (ten) cognitive and conative sense-organs, the (five) vital breaths, the mind, the intellect and the heart. You keep yourself shrouded from the *jīvas* due to their ego (*ahaṁkāra*) comprising of three *guṇas*.[4]

43. We bow to you who are infinite, subtle (and hence beyond the ken of perception and therefore) not subject to changes or modifications, and the Omniscient. (Due to your Māyā) You are the subject of various theories[5] (such as you exist, do not exist, are Omniscient, non-omniscient, bound in *saṁsāra*, absolutely free, one, many). You are the power that is described in the words as also the power of description inherent in words.[6]

1. *Kālāya*—One who is like a Wish-yielding cow to his devotees—VJ

2. Due to 'difference-cum-non-difference', and 'Duality-cum-non duality relations', this is explanable—SD.

3. *bhūtātmane*—

(i) VR. To him who enters in and controls all the beings (*Brahman* as *niyantā*). This verse brings out the causal relation between the subtle and gross sentient-cum-non-sentient aspects of Brahman as well as body-cum-soul relation. (*evaṃ sūkṣma-cidācid-viśiṣṭa-Brahmaṇaḥ sthūlāvasthā cidacid-viśiṣṭabhede tayoḥ kārya-kāraṇa-bhāvaḥ...śarīrātmabhāvaśceti nibandhanadvayam uktam*)

(ii) VT.—to him who inspires consciousness i.e. gives knowledge of beings (*Jñāna-pradāya*)

4. VJ. reads v.l. *nirguṇenābhimānena*

You, whose glory remains concealed through ignorance (*ajñānena*) which is not born of *guṇas* like *sattva* (*sattvādi-guṇa-janmarahitena*).

5. *nānāvādānurodhāya*—(i) Established despite various theories—SS.

(ii) Common to all theories—VJ.

(iii) God appears according to one's views (*yathā nirūpyate tathā Bhagavān bhavati*—VB

6. *Vācyavācaka-śaktaye*—Both meaning and word derive their power from you.—VT.

44. Salutations to you who are the Source of the means or instruments to arrive at correct knowledge[1]; Absolute Wisdom[2] (independent of any source of knowledge); the source of Scriptures (i.e. whose breath are the Vedas).[3] We salute again and again to you who are both participation in and withdrawal from the worldly activities, and the Veda itself[4] (which prescribes both types of injunctions).

45. We bow to you Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of the highest bliss, whose nature is to draw away (i.e. to absolve) the sins of his devotees, whose fourfold forms or manifestations (*vyūhas*) are Rāma i.e, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Vāsudeva (of pure *sattva*),. Pradyumna, of the highest splendour (and possessor of Supreme affluence), and Aniruddha, comprehensible only to the wise—you who protect your votaries bestowing them with grades of liberation such as *Sāyujyatā* etc.

46.* Obeisance to you who illuminate the internal organ by presiding over its four aspects—mind, reason, the intel-

1. *Pramāṇa-mūlāya* (i) The source of perception or cognition (lit. the eye of the eye etc.)—ŚR.

(ii) The source and support of the Vedas, the authority of which rests on you.—VB.

2. *Kavaye* : (i) The knower of the past, (present) and the Future —VJ.

(ii) Whose form is the Word or the material cause of the Word—VB.

3. *Śāstra-yonaye* : cf.:(i) *Śāstra-yonitvāt* ! *Brahma Sūtra* 1.1.3

(ii) *are'sya mahato bhūtasya niśvasitam etad yad Ṛgvedo Yajur vedaḥ sāma vedo'tharvāṅgirasaḥ.* —*Bṛha. Up.* 4.5.11

(i) Knowable through *śāstras* i.e. The Vedas—VJ.

(ii) Hence whose testimony are the *śāstras* or the accurate conception about whom is found in *śāstras*—VT., SD.

4. *nigamāya*—The promulgator of *Upaniṣadic* knowledge—SS., VR.

* (i) VR: Salutations to you who enhance the attributive intelligence (*dharma-bhūta-jñāna*) of your devotees and reduce or diminish the knowledge of your non-devotees by shrouding them (as it were) with Māyā constituted of three *guṇas* who are indicated through the function of the mental faculties comprising of *guṇas*; the witness of the hearts of all beings simultaneously; the eternal self-illuminating light of knowledge.

(ii) VJ : We bow to you who shed light on *sattva* and other *guṇas*, as also on knowledge, devotion etc. (of the devotees) ; who dwell in the *Prakṛti* constituted of *guṇas*; whose existence is deduced through knowledge received through sense-organs; the self-knowing witness to all *guṇas*.

lect and the ego, in the form of four manifestations—*vyūhas*—(mentioned above); who shroud yourself under those *guṇas* and shine forth as many; who are indicated and perceived through the functions of the internal organ (mentioned above), who are merely the witness to the mental faculties or aspects (referred to above), yourself remaining self-knowing yet beyond the ken of perception.

47. Oh Lord ! The Prompter of Senses ! May our obeisance be paid to you whose greatness and working are beyond the comprehension (of our intellectual capacity), but are implicit as the cause of every phenomenon.[1] You are the silent sage[2] revelling in your own blissful self.

48.* We bow to you who are conversant with the ways (courses) of the high and low (or the gross and the subtle) and preside over them all; who are both transcendental to and immanent in the Universe, and its witness as well as the cause.[3]

49. (Beings are under your control. How can you hold them responsible for their nature or behaviour) Oh Lord ! Though perfectly detached, you wield the eternal power called

1. *Sarva-vyākṛta-siddhaye*—(i) You are the source of everything and everyone such as gods etc. that are manifested and the controller of senses —VR.

(ii) The source of the manifestation of the world of name and form (*nāma-rūpātmakaṁ jagat sarvaṁ vyākṛtam, tasya siddhir utpattir yena*)—VJ.

2. *munaye* etc. (*i*) You observe complete silence inspite of your mercifulness in protecting *jīvas* (creatures) from three types of miseries, and your superiority to the world from god Brahmā to a clump of grass—VR.

(ii) The All-knower who never speaks anything irrelevant or false —VJ.

*Salutations to you who know the state or condition of both the cause and the effect; who stand above them all; who are different from *jīvas* yet are called *viśva* due to your presence in them—VJ.

(ii) We bow to you who know the causes of the gross and the subtle. You are the basis of the Universe which is superimposed on you. You are free from the conditions known as *viśva, taijasa* etc. Knowing that Kṛṣṇa was pleased with the fiftyfive epithets given to him in praise, the serpent's wives argue that the nature of a being is created as such by the Lord and hence Kāliya is not guilty as he acted according to his nature for which the Lord is responsible.—KD 16.46. 607-622.

3. Who are above the states called *Viśva, taijasa* etc. but still appear to be a part and parcel of it through Māyā—ŚR.

Time, and bring about the creation, preservation and destruction of this universe by means of *guṇas* (of *Prakṛti*). You carry on your fruitful sportive activity by awakening with your glance the various (latent) propensities in the nature of all creatures.

50* All these forms of quiet, turbulent and stupid natures found in all the three worlds, are the toys in your sports. Now the gentle-natured are dear to you, as you have incarnated for the establishment of righteousness, and you are present here to protect the saintly, righteous people (*or* your forms which desire to protect the righteous are gentle and dear).

51. The first offence of one's child (or subject) deserves to be condoned (and tolerated) by the Lord. Oh tranquil-minded Lord ! Be pleased to pardon this stupid creature who has not recognised you (your divine nature).

52. Be gracious to him, Oh Lord. The serpent is on the point of death. We, women, deserve to be pitied by the good and the righteous. Be pleased to grant unto us our life in the form of our husband.

53. May you be pleased to ordain us, your maid-servants, what we should do for you ; for one who faithfully abides by your command, becomes free from fear of all kinds (or attains to liberation from *saṁsāra*)."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

54. The glorious Lord who was thus fervidly appealed to and praised by the wives of the serpent, left the swooning serpent whose hoods were badly smashed with his kicking (with heels).

55. Regaining gradually his senses and vitality, Kāliya began to breathe slowly with difficulty. The miserable creature folded its palms, addressed to Lord Kṛṣṇa (as follows).

*Kāliya said* :

56. Dominated as we are by *tamas*, we are wicked-mind-

* It behoves you to be gracious unto all gentle-natured (*Sāttvika*), ferocious-tempered (*rājasic*) and dull-natured (*tāmasika*) forms, teeming in the three worlds. You have, however, incarnated for the protection of righteousness. Hence the protection to the gentle is dear to you and equally so are those who wish to renounce their offensive nature —VR.

ed since our very birth, and entertain wrath for a long time. It is difficult, Oh Lord, to relinquish one's natural disposition (whereby one identifies one's body with the soul and feels attachment to body and its belongings), as it exercises a powerful hold on people like an evil spirit.

57*. By you has been created this universe as the outcome of the three *guṇas* and is replete with various natures, prowess, energy, hereditary or class differences (seeds), latent desires and bodily shapes of forms, Oh Creator of the Universe.

58. Oh glorious Lord ! In this world, we, serpents, are by nature deeply wrathful. Deluded by nature as we are, how can we escape from (the clutches of) your Māyā which is so difficult to shake off.

59. You, Omniscient Lord of the world, are the cause of relieving us from the influence of Māyā; therefore, be pleased to confer your grace or punishment on us as you deem it proper.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

60. Hearing his speech, the Lord who assumed the human form for a specific purpose (of helping gods) ordered : "You must not stay here, Oh serpent. Hurry up and go to the sea along with your wives, children and kinsmen. Let this river be used by cows and men.

61. Whatever mortal being remembers this command of mine to you, and recites it both in the morning and in the evening, shall have no fear from you (serpents).

62. Whoever, after taking bath in this pool, the scene of my sport, propitiates gods (and *manes*) by offering water-libations, and observing a fast, worships Me meditating on Me all the while, is absolved of all sins.

63. That Garuḍa of beautiful wings, in terror of whom, you fled (abandoned) the island Ramaṇaka and resorted to this pool, shall not now devour you, as you bear my foot-prints."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

64. Thus addressed by Lord Kṛṣṇa of miraculous feats,

* VJ. Although Viṣṇu is the creator of the Universe, god Brahmā created the different varieties of *guṇas* or natural characteristics. They are due to the variety in the proportions and combinations of *svabhāva* (in-born nature), *vīrya* (prowess), *ojas* (virility, vitality) etc.

Kāliya and his wives devoutly worshipped him with delight (at the assurance of safety from Garuḍa).

65-66. They worshipped the Lord of the Universe with celestial clothes, necklaces and gems and ornaments of superb quality, with heavenly perfumes and ointments and a grand wreath of blue lotuses. Having propitiated the Lord whose banner is Garuḍa, they, with great pleasure, circumambulated him and bowed to him and were duly permitted by the Lord.

67. Accompanied by his wives, friends and children, Kāliya went to the Ramaṇaka island in the sea. The Yamunā of nectar-like water became instantly rid of poison through the grace of the Lord, who out of sport has assumed a human form.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

*Rescue from the Forest Conflagration*

*King Parikṣit enquired* :

1. Why did Kāliya migrate from Ramaṇaka, the home of the Nāgas ? Or what specific offence did he commit against Garuḍa ?

*Śrī Śuka replied* :

2-3. Oh King of mighty arms ! It was formerly agreed[1] that whatever share of offerings was received by the Nāgas, every month, from the serpent-worshippers, was to be dedicated to the noble-souled Garuḍa, and to be deposited on every New Moon day at the foot of a particular tree (in Ramaṇaka) by serpents who were the prey of Garuḍa. All Nāgas thus contributed their share for self-protection.

1. V.B. : quotes the following agreement brought about by Brahmā between Garuḍa and the serpents :

*amāyāṁ vṛkṣa-mūle tu Nāga-lokeṣu yad bhavet |*
*ekasmin divase tāvad ekatra sthāpayantu hi ||*
*tato hi Garuḍas tasmins tad bhuktvā naiva pīḍayet|*
*iti vyavasthayā sarpā māsi māsi balim daduḥ||*

SS. states that they offered one serpent per month to Garuḍa.

4. Being elated with pride for its power and virulence of its poison, Kāliya, the son of Kadru, slighted Garuḍa, and ate up the offerings intended for him.

5. On learning this, the glorious Garuḍa, beloved of the Lord, got enraged, and with a desire to kill Kāliya, swooped down on it with terrific speed, Oh King.

6. Raising up its numerous heads (hoods), the serpent whose weapon is poison, advanced against Garuḍa who was vehemently rushing at it, and bit him with fangs as its weapons, and looked terrific with its dreadful tongues, poisonous hissing and cruel eyes.

7. Brushing it aside with the terrific vehemence of his speed, the wrathful Garuḍa, the son of Tārkṣya (the sage Kāśyapa), the carrier of Lord Viṣṇu and possessed of terrific prowess, struck it down with its left wing[1] brilliant like gold.

8. Struck down with the wing of Garuḍa, Kāliya became overwhelmed with fear and agitated. It entered the pool of the Yamunā that was out of bounds for Garuḍa, and hence unapproachable.

9. On one occasion Garuḍa, being extremely hungry carried away by force his favourite prey—an acquatic creature, though he was prohibited from doing so by the Sage Śaubhari.[2]

10. Seeing that the fish were greatly over-whelmed with grief and felt miserable due to the death of that fish king, Śaubhari, out of compassion for the acquatic creatures in that pool, and for the safety of the creatures living in that pool declared;

11. "If ever Garuḍa enters this pool and eats the fish hereof, he will instantly meet death. I utter the truth."

12. Only Kāliya knew this (Śaubhari's) curse but no other serpent knew it. So it resided in that pool out of the fear of Garuḍa. It was expelled out of it by Kṛṣṇa.

13-14. Finding Kṛṣṇa come out of the pool, decorated with heavenly garlands, sandal pigment and rich dress and

1. VT. notes that it was to express his contempt for Kāliya that Garuḍa used his left wing.

2. Probably the same sage who married all the fifty daughters of Māndhātā. It might be during his stay in the pool of the Yamunā for performing the penance, that the above incident took place. (*vide Supra*) 9.6. 39-55, also VP. 4.2.69-131)

beautified with numerous costly big diamonds, gems and gold ornaments all over his Person, all cowherds leapt to their feet like sense-organs on return of life (or 'creatures after the return of the vital Principle'), and with their hearts overwhelmed with rapturous joy, embraced him with deep affection.

15. Regaining their consciousness, Yaśodā, Rohiṇī, Nanda and other cowherds and cowherdesses got their desires fulfilled by meeting Kṛṣṇa.

16. Balarāma clasped Kṛṣṇa in the arms and laughed, as he knew the prowess of Kṛṣṇa.

16A. *VR's text adds this half-verse*:

He seated him on his lap and looked at him again and again in great affection. The trees, cows, bullocks, calves all were filled with extreme joy.

17. The Brāhmaṇa preceptors (of Nanda) along with their wives (who had already come there along with all the inhabitants of Vraja), now approached Nanda and congratulated him, "Thank God ! How fortunate it is that your son seized by Kāliya is liberated from its clutches.

18. Confer some gifts on Brāhmaṇas, on account of the deliverance of Kṛṣṇa (from Kāliya)". Delighted at heart Nanda immediately gave cows and gold as gifts.

19. The highly fortunate Yaśodā who got restored to her child, which was as good as lost, hugged him. Seating him on her lap, he again and again shed tears of joy.

19-A *VR's text adds* :

In the meanwhile, when the sun set, Kṛṣṇa along with Rāma camped there along with their parents, cowherds and their wealth—the herds of cattle.

20. The inhabitants of Vraja and cows, oppressed as they were by hunger, thirst and physical exhaustion, passed that night near the bank of the Yamunā, oh King of Kings !

20-A *VJ.'s text adds* : (a half verse)

At that time, in Vraja, Oh best of Kurus !

21. In the jungle dried up with summer, a great forest conflagration broke out at midnight, and surrounding the Vraja lying fast asleep, it began to scorch them.

22. Touched by the fire, the inhabitants of Vraja woke up and in their bewilderment sought resort to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord who had assumed a human form through his Māyā.

23. "Oh Kṛṣṇa ! Oh highly fortunate Kṛṣṇa ! Oh Rāma ! Oh Rāma of infinite prowess ! This extremely terrific fire is now consuming us who are yours (your devotees).

24. Oh Lord ! Protect us who are your well-wishers and friends, from this death-like (deadly) fire from which it is extremely difficult to escape. We cannot give up your feet (resorting to which) there is no fear from any quarter".

25. Perceiving this helplessness and danger of his people (devotees), the Supreme Ruler of the earth, the Infinite Lord of unfathomable powers, swallowed up that terrible fire.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

*Slaying of the Demon Pralamba*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. Surrounded by his kinsmen whose hearts were full of delight, Kṛṣṇa, whose glories were sung (by them), entered Vraja (looking) beautiful with herds of cows.

2. While they (Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa) assuming through their Māyā power, the guise of cowherds, were indulging in various sports, there was the advent of the season called the Summer which is not much pleasant to embodied beings.

3. It, however, appeared like the spring due to the special (environmental) characteristics of Vṛndāvana where the glorious Lord Keśava (Kṛṣṇa) was personally staying along with Balarāma.

4. It resounded with the sound of cascades that drowned the jingling of the crickets. It looked beautiful with clusters of trees constantly sprayed with the particles of water from the waterfalls.

5. Due to the pleasant breeze blowing over the waves of the rivers and the pools (and the cascades) and moistened with spray and carrying the fragrant pollen of white lilies, blue lotuses and other flowers, the inhabitants of that forest (Vṛndā-vana) which, covered with meadows richly overgrown with green grass, did not experience the scorching heat radiating from the sun and forest fires in the summer.

6. At the place, the scorching rays of the sun, fierce like virulent poison, were not able to dry up the moisture and verdant nature of the soil wherein the mixture of sand and mire on all sides of the bank remained always wet by the waves that used to beat against the banks of rivers with unfathomable water.

7. The resplendently beautiful forest was in full blossom and was resounded with the cries and notes of various birds and beasts, with singing peacocks and humming bees and warb-ling cuckoos and waterfowls.

8. With a desire to enjoy sports, the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by Balarāma and surrounded with cows and cowherds, entered the forest playing upon his flute.

9. With their persons decorated with tender foliage, peacock feathers, clusters of flowers and coloured earth, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa and other cowherds indulged in dancing, wrestling and singing.

10. While Kṛṣṇa was dancing, some cowherds sang, some clapped their hands, some played on flutes or blew their horns, while others applauded and cheered up.

11. Gods who had assumed the forms of cowherds[1] and thus completely concealed their god-head, eulogised in applause both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, as actors do to cheer up another actor (in spite of their master-servant relation).

12. The two brothers wearing side-locks, sometimes, sported by running in circles, long-jumps, shot-putting, striking of arms, tug-of-war and wrestling.

1. VR. reads *gopa-jāti-praticchannau* as adj. qualifying 'Kṛṣṇa-Rāmau' and interprets : 'Gods who assumed the forms of cowherds glorified Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma who had completely concealed their divinity in the guise of cowherds.'

13. Sometimes while other cowherds were dancing both (Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma) sang personally, and played on instruments and applauded (with words) "well-done ! Buck up", Oh great king.

14-16. Some time they would play with a *Bilva* fruit, sometime with *Kumbha* fruit, and now with a handful of *Āmalaka* fruits (myrobalans). Sometimes (in a running race or with swift movements in an arena) they would playfully not allow themselves to be touched, while at times they would play hide-and-seek after shutting the eyes of a cowherd boy—or by blindfolding and such other games. Sometimes they would divert themselves by mimicking the sounds and notes of beasts, birds. Now they would indulge in jumping like frogs, and now they would cut jokes of various kinds; now by swinging with the help of branches of trees and sometimes by playing the role of kings.

Indulging in such sports well known among the people, they rambled all over the area in the rivers, on the mountains, in the valleys, bowers, in woods and lakes.

17. While Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa were grazing their cattle in the meadows of that forest, a demon called Pralamba assumed the guise of a cowherd and entered his followers with a view to kidnapping them.

18. Even though Kṛṣṇa, the omniscient (All-perceiving) Lord of the Yadu clan, knew it (his real intention), he agreed to be his playmate and friend, with an intention of finishing with him.

19. Kṛṣṇa, a past-master in games, summoned all the cowherds and proposed, "Oh comrade-cowherds ! Now let us play by dividing ourselves into two suitable parties."

20. In that game, the cowherds selected Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa as their captains—some (one party) accepted Kṛṣṇa's side, while the rest (the other party) Balarāma's side.

21. They indulged in various sports characterised by one party members to carry as mounts the members of the other party—the winners being the riders and the defeated party-members, the carriers.

22. In this way, some boys riding and some carrying and

simultaneously grazing the cattle—they went near a banyan tree called Bhāṇḍīraka.

23. When cowherds like Śrīdāmā, Vṛṣabha and others belonging to the party of Rāma, became victorious in the game, Kṛṣṇa and others carried them on their backs, Oh King.

24. Being defeated, Lord Kṛṣṇa bore Śrīdāman, Bhadra carried Vṛṣabha and Pralamba took Balarāma, the son of Rohiṇī on his back.

25. Considering that Kṛṣṇa was irresistible, the prominent demon Pralamba swiftly carried away Balarāma far beyond the limit for dismounting.

26. When his progress was stopped by carrying Balarāma who grew weighty as the mount Meru (the king of all mountains), the demon who assumed his original (demonic) form adorned with gold ornaments and clothes, looked like a cloud illuminated with flashes of lightning carrying the Moon (the Lord of Stars) on his back.

27. Balarāma (the wielder of a plough as a weapon) was a bit disturbed to see the demon's body soaring with crashing speed in the sky, and with burning eyes, terrific (frowning) brows, terrible jaws and teeth, hair like flames of blazing fire, weirdly dazzling with the splendour of gold wristlets, crown and ear-rings.

28. The very next moment, Balarāma regained his consciousness (of his divine nature) and grew fearless. And like Indra striking vehemently a mountain with his Vajra, in great rage, he dealt a heavy blow with his fist on the head of his enemy who was carrying him away from his group of cowherd friends.

29. The moment the blow descended on his head, it was shattered to pieces; vomitting blood profusely (from his mouth), he lost his consciousness. Giving out a terrific roar, the demon fell dead, like a mountain struck down by Indra's weapon (thunderbolt).

30. Seeing the demon Pralamba killed by the mighty Balarāma, the cowherds were extremely astonished and shouted, "Bravo ! well done !".

31. Pronouncing benedictions on him, they highly praised him. And he deserved it. With their hearts overwhelmed with

affection, they embraced him as one returned from the realm of death.

32. When the sinful demon Pralamba was killed, gods felt highly gratified and happy. They showered on Balarāma wreaths of flowers and applauded him with their approbations "well done ! Well done !"

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

*Swallowing up of a Forest-conflagration*

*Śrī Śuka continued* :

1. While the cowherds were deeply engrossed in playing, their cows roamed to a great distance, grazing at will, and lured by green pasture, strayed into an inaccessible part of the dense jungle.

2. Entering from one forest (-area) to another, the she-goats, cows and she-buffaloes became thirsty while wandering in the forest, began to cry loudly and got into a thicket of reeds.

3. Not finding the cattle, cowherds, of whom Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were prominent, felt repentance (for their dereliction of duty). Despite their search for the cows, they were at a loss to know where they could have gone.

4. Having thus lost their means of livelihood, the cowherds got perplexed not knowing what to do. Then all of them followed the track of the cows marked with their footprints and blades of grass cut by their hoofs.

5. Finding their wealth of cattle strayed from its path in the jungle of Muñja-grass and lowing helplessly, they directed their herds back and were overwhelmed with fatigue and thirst.

5-A. *VR's text adds*:

Climbing up to the top of a tall tree and showing his personality dark like a cloud in complexion, Kṛṣṇa loudly called out those distressed cows by their individual names.

6. Being called by their names by the glorious Lord in a tone deep like the thundering of clouds, the cows became overwhelmed with joy to hear the sound of their names, and responded with lowing loudly.

7. Thereafter, as the Fate would have it, there broke out, on all side, a forest conflagration causing havoc in all the inhabitants of the forest. And helped by its assistant, the strong wind, the great fire appeared desirous of lapping up all the mobile and immobile creatures with its tongues of dreadful flames.

8. Observing the advance of the forest-fire on all sides, the cowherds and cows got horrified. Just as people afflicted with the fear of death seek asylum with Lord Hari, they resorted to Kṛṣṇa along with Balarām, for shelter and prayed to Him.

9. "Oh Kṛṣṇa ! Oh Kṛṣṇa of infinite prowess ! Oh Balarāma ! Balarāma of immeasurable power ! It now behoves you to protect us who are being burnt by fire, and have approached you for asylum.

10. We are really your kinsmen and as such, should not be destroyed thus. You are the knower of all that is righteousness. We are all devoted to you and have in you our saviour."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

11. Hearing the pitiful appeal of his cowherd-comrades, Lord Hari assured them, "Don't be afraid. Please close your eyes."

12. With the words 'Be it so', they closed their eyes when, in the meanwhile, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Master of Yoga swallowed up that menacing conflagration and completely saved them from that calamity.

13. Then, on opening their eyes, they were extremely surprised to find themselves and their cows safe from danger, and brought over to Bhāṇḍīra[1].

1. From the details given in VT. about the bunyan tree called Bhāṇḍira, it appears that at the time of Jīva Gosvāmī, they located it to the Northwest of the Śiva temple called 'Spāro' (?) near Vṛndāvana, and the jungle of muñja grass where the conflagration was swallowed up by Kṛṣṇa was ten miles to the south of the bunyan tree.

—Bh.P. 10.19.13 (*Vrindabana Edn* Vol. I P. 673)

14. Observing that it was due to the yogic power of Kṛṣṇa and the manifestation of his Yogic Potency (yogamāyā) that they were delivered from (death from) the forest fire, they came to believe in his divine nature.

15. Tending homewards the cows in the evening, Kṛṣṇa along with Balarāma, returned to Vraja, playing on his flute, while the cowherd boys were singing his praise.

16. The very sight of Kṛṣṇa (Govinda) filled the Gopīs (cowherd-women) with Supreme delight, as every moment of separation from him was felt by them as a hundred ages (*yugas*).

## CHAPTER TWENTY

*Description of the Rainy Season and the Autumn*

*Śrī Śuka said**:

1. The cowherd-boys related to their mothers and other women-folk (particularizing the special points) in details, the miraculous feats of them both (*viz.* of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma) as to how Kṛṣṇa rescued them from a forest-conflagration, and how Balarāma killed the demon Pralamba.

2. Listening to the account, elderly cowherds and cowherd women were astonished. They (thenceforth) looked upon Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as the most prominent gods who have come down to stay in Vraja.

3.** Then (after the summer), there was the advent of the rainy season which is favourable to the regeneration of all be-

* In VJ.'s text verses 1 and 2 form a part of the last i.e. VJ's 17th chapter. VJ's new (18th) chapter begins from the 3rd verse of this (20th) chapter.

** Note : VV. 3-24 give a spiritually suggestive, beautiful description of the rainy season in the epic style. Annotators have tried to find some 'hidden meaning' convenient to their school of thought in these verses.

VJ. regards this description as an illustration (*dṛṣṭānta*) of the deep or superficial (of pure and not so pure) devotion to god Nārāyaṇa. (*Nārāyaṇa-bhakti-vaiśadyāvaiśadya-dṛṣṭāntatvena Prāvid ṛtum varṇayati |*

ings, and during which, the sky appears beautiful with refulgent circles (round the Sun and the Moon), and is resounded with thunders.

4. Being overspread with thick dark blue clouds (heavy with water), attended with lightning and thunder, and with its light (of the Sun or the Moon) being obscured and dimmed, the sky looked like Brahman modified by the conditioning *guṇas* of *Prakṛti*[1] (or the individual soul whose spiritual wisdom is obscured by *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* each corresponding to the lightning, thunder and clouds which overcast the sky)[2].

5. (Like a king redistributing his wealth for public welfare to his subjects, from whom he collected it in the form of land revenue and other taxes). At the proper time (in the rainy season), the Sun-god or the Rainy season[3] began to release the wealth in the form of water to the earth from which he absorbed it with his rays, during the (last) eight months.

6. Mighty clouds charged with lightning (with which they viewed the earth parched with the summer heat) and violently tossed by tempestuous winds (as if they were overwhelmed with compassion for the world afflicted with the summer) showered down the life-giving[4] water (resuscitating the world) which brought delight to all, just as merciful persons[5] lay down their lives out of compassion for the harassed and tormented people.

1. *Saguṇa Brahman*—(1) Individual soul conditioned by *guṇas* but capable of expanding by *guṇas* and not physically—VR (2) Four-faced god Brahmā—VJ

2. (i) VR : By nature, the sky is clear, pure and bright but gets darkened by clouds etc. So also though knowledge is inherent in the *Jīva*, the cognitive power remains ineffective till the *Jīva* attains Liberation or *mukti*. Hence one should try for Liberation.

(ii) The Sun: the brightest luminary is shrouded with clouds like god Brahmā with the three *guṇas*.—VJ.

3. *Parjanya*—The sun-god who presides over the thundering clouds —VJ.

4. v.l. *prāṇinām*—The very life of living beings—VR.

5. Just as the glances of Lord Kṛṣṇa shower the water in the form of Spiritual Knowledge on his earnest devotees—VJ.

7.* Just as the shrivelled and emaciated body of a person undergoing severe austerities for the attainment of some desired object, regains its normal health and plumpness after the realization of that object, the earth that was parched and shrivelled through the heat of the sun (in the summer), now swelled up (and became green) when drenched with water by the rain-god.

8. At the nightfall (when the sky is overcast with clouds) it is the fire-flies and not the planets that shine through darkness even as the heretical scriptures dazzle in their sins, in the Kali age and not the *Vedas*.

9. Just as young Brāhmaṇa pupils break their silence at the end of their daily religious routine, and begin their recitation of the *Vedas* on hearing the voice of their preceptor, the hibernating frogs which were lying silent, broke out croaking on hearing the sound of rains (or the thunder of the rainy clouds).

10. Rivulets that dry up in the summer, now overflow their banks and flowed into the wrong channel, like the body and riches of persons with unrestrained mind (and enslaved by their senses) and misdirected to the wrong track.

11. Like the army (camp) of a king, the earth appeared green with verdant grass (at some places), crimson-coloured by (the crowds of) *Indragopa* insects, and at some places, it became covered with the growth of umbrella-shaped mushrooms.

12.** Fields with their rich crop brought delight to the farmers and heart-burning[1] to the rich (feeling jealousy towards

* This verse shows the *pravṛtti mārga* of worldly prosperity—VJ.

** SR & KD. : Fields caused joy or grief to the farmers according to the richness or failure of harvests as they did not know that everything depends on destiny.

VT. takes *kṣetra* as 'a body'.

VR: The verse teaches that one should feel joy at the prosperity of others.

VJ. interprets *kṣetra* as 'a sacred place' and explains: Due to the vision of the great glory of the Lord, holy places bring joy. But to those who are proud and materialistic and think about the cost of pilgrimage find that the same holy places are full of misery and anxiety. One who is keen on getting *Mokṣa* (Liberation) should devote himself to the lotus feet of Hari.'

1. VB. : To the proud kings who are bent on conquering the enemies, the rains and fields covered with crops, cause obstruction and troubles, as they do not know that victory or defeat depends on the Will of the Lord.

the farmers) as they did not know that everything depends on the luck.

13.* Being drenched with the fresh rain-waters,[1] all beings living on the land and in water assumed a beautiful, winsome appearance immediately, even as persons attain to attractive divine form[2] through the service (worship and contemplation) of Hari (due to its being the highest form of religion and of supremely blissful nature).

14. The sea, the waters of which are already tossed into high waves by stormy winds, becomes more violently agitated at the confluences with rivers, even as the heart of an immature *yogi*, still influenced with passions, becomes highly perturbed by contacts with worldly objects.[3]

15. Though continuously subjected to the down-pour of rains, the mountains were not agitated at all, like the devotees of Hari whose minds are absorbed in the meditation of the Lord and are not perturbed even under overwhelming calamities (of threefold nature).

16. Being unused (or unrepaired for a long time) and hence overgrown and covered with grass, the tracks and paths become doubtful (unrecognizable) like the *Vedas* which are not properly studied (and repeatedly recited), get consigned to oblivion by the force (passage) of time.

17. Just as pleasure-seeking women bear no constancy to men of virtue and merit (if devoid of money), the fickle-hearted

* VT. endorses ŚR. and states that both the process and attainment (*sādhanāvasthā* and *sādhyāvasthā*) of the service of Hari are supremely blissful.

VR. : No Grace can be attained except through the service of Hari.

1. VJ. interprets *vāri* as 'knowledge' that removes the misery of *saṁsāra* of the denizens of the nether-world (*pātāla*), inhabitants of the terrestrial globe and residents of the higher (celestial) world. To these inhabitants, pure spiritual knowledge leading to gracious divine forms, is attainable through the service of Hari.

2. VB. : Just as devotees assume the four-armed divinely refulgent Hari-like form etc. 'The inhabitants of land etc.' stand for persons characterised by *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

3. *guṇa*—(i) *rajo-guṇa*—VJ.

(ii) Natural propensities creating agitation in the mind for sensual pleasure. These are to be controlled by meditating on Hari.—VR.

flashes of lightning did not remain constant (and faithful) to clouds which are the friends of the world.

18. Just as the attributeless Supreme Person manifests himself in the world which is a product or conglomeration of *guṇas*, (viz. *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*), the rain-bow (Indra's bow) though devoid of a *guṇa* (a string), shone forth in the sky, the special quality (*guṇa*) of which is sound.

19. Veiled over by clouds shining with her own beams of light, the moon did not shine forth like the individual soul, enveloped and shrouded in its ego-sense, illumined by its own light.

20. Just as persons sorely distressed and (hence) disgusted with the miseries of household life (*saṁsāra*) feel delighted at the arrival of the devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa, peacocks to which the advent of the rainy season (*lit.* the appearance of the clouds) is itself an occasion of joy, become exulted with their hair (feathers) standing on their end (while dancing with their feathers spread out).

21.* Just as persons, at first grown emaciated and exhausted through asceticism, become stout and robust on attaining the fruition of their desires, the trees shrunk and dried up through the heat of the summer, sucked water through their feet (i.e. roots) and assumed many new (rich) forms (putting forth luxuriantly new branches, foliage, fresh blossoms, fruits etc.).

22. (This verse shows the characteristics of persons permanently indulging in saṁsāra—*nitya-saṁsāri*).

The cranes continue to stay even in sliding, miry and thorny banks of lakes, Oh Parīkṣit, like unto wicked-minded persons given to low pleasures, continue to live in houses wherein they carry on their detestable cruel (*lit.* of non-pacific nature) jobs.

* VR. Persons performing penance with some material end in view grow emaciated through penance, but after realizing the fruition of their desire, become multiplied in the form of sons, grandsons etc., and persons who, with no ulterior motive except the propitiation of the Lord, perform penance, attain Liberation, and are endowed with various supernatural forms and life similar to the Lord.

VJ. interprets *pādapa* as 'ascetics' and explains: As ascetics performing penance, drink the ambrosia of *Śāstric* knowledge and controlling their senses and minds realize the Supreme Soul (*paramātman*) Himself.

23. While the god of rains poured down showers of rains, dams and bridges got damaged and breached by floods, just as the paths[1] (of religious duties prescribed for different classes of society (*varṇas*) and stages of life (*āśramas*) in the Vedas, are breached by attacks of false heretical theories in the *Kali* Age.

24. Clouds impelled by winds showered their nectar-like waters to creatures below, just as rulers of the earth or merchant kings advised by Brāhmaṇas at opportune times, distribute their blessed wealth among the subjects (or carry out works of social welfare).

25. When the forest was thus abounding in trees richly laden with ripe dates and rose apples, Kṛṣṇa, surrounded by cows and cowherds, and accompanied by Balarāma, entered in it for sporting.

26. At the call of Kṛṣṇa, cows which (normally) proceeded in slow gait owing to the weight of heavy udders, hastened with quick steps, showering with joy the milk from their udders on the way.

27. On the way, Lord Kṛṣṇa saw the inhabitants of the forest (men, birds and beasts) exulted with joy, rows of trees dripping with honey, streams of waters cascading from hills, and their echoing sound in the hills and the caves that were at hand.

28. Sometimes when it rained, the Lord took shelter under a tree or entered a cave, and sported Himself joyously eating bulbs, roots and fruits.

29. Accompanied by Balarāma, he sat on a slab of stone near water, and ate the rice mixed with curds (brought from home), sharing it with cowherds who were to sit with him for the meal.[2]

30-31. Beholding the bulls and calves lying on the lush green grass ruminating in great satisfaction, with their eyes

1. Due to the heretical arguments advanced by the Buddha and his followers the Vedic paths of action (*Karma*), of Knowledge and of Devotion are broken down—VB. Bhakti, however, has a place in non-vedic religions in India.

KD. includes the followers of *āgamas* and *tantras* under heretics.

2. Some other cowherds made their own arrangement at different places—VB.

closed, and cows fatigued with the heavy weight of their udders (also resting and chewing the cud in satisfaction), and the splendid beauty of the rainy season enhanced by his own enchanting powers, bringing delight to all creatures, the Lord felt gratified (with them all).

32. While Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa were dwelling at that Vraja in this way, the autumn characterised by cloudless skies crystal-like waters and gentle breezes, set in.

33. (Originally waters are crystal clear, but they become turbid due to rainy season). Now due to the autumnal season which makes the lotus-plants blossom forth, waters have regained their original translucent nature, just as the minds of persons who have fallen from the path of *yoga*, regain their mental serenity by resuming their *yogic* practices.

34. Just as devotion to Kṛṣṇa removes all the evils setting upon persons belonging to different stages of life (*āśramas*)[1], the Autumn dispelled all the clouds from the sky and prevented the contacts of the elements or the congestion of created beings, dried up the mire on the earth, and cleansed the turbidity from water.

35. Having discharged (and thus renounced) all their possessions (in the form of the waters in them), the clouds shone forth in their spotless white splendour, as quiescent sages who have absolved themselves of all sins do, after renouncing all their three-fold desires (about progeny, property and celebrity).

36. Just as people with spiritual wisdom impart their nectar-like knowledge on some occasions, and refuse to do so on others, the mountains also at some places allowed the streams of pure water to flow, while at others they withheld them.

37. Just as ignorant persons immersed in their household matters are not cognisant of the daily shortening of the span of their life, so the creatures in shallow waters did not perceive the diminishing water level every day.

38. Just as a poverty-stricken, wretched man burdened with family responsibilities but of uncontrolled senses, undergoes

1. SR. enumerates the evils : The trouble of physical work during studenthood, the pangs of separation in married state, and sexual passions etc in *sannyāsins*.

miseries, the creatures in shallow waters suffered from the heat of the autumnal sun.

39. Marshy tracts of land gradually gave up their marshiness, and the plants their unripeness, just as (spiritually) wise men slowly (step by step) discard their notions of 'I' and 'mine' with respect to their bodies and belongings which are distinctly different from their self.

40. When the season of autumn set in, the waters of the ocean grew calm and still, even as a meditative sage established in his self, gives up ritualistic performances and recitation of the Vedas.

41. Cultivators secured the supply of water to their fields by strengthening the bunds (and thus stopping the breaches and leakages), just as *Yogins*, by control of senses, preserve their spiritual knowledge which otherwise gets dissipated (through unsubdued senses)[1].

42. The moon relieved the sufferings of creatures caused by the rays (heat) of the autumnal sun, just as the (revelation of) spiritual knowledge alleviates the troubles caused by the (false) identification of the body with the soul, or Lord Kṛṣṇa removes the pangs of separation of (cowherd) women of Vraja.

43. The cloudless sky shone forth beautifully with bright stars twinkling clearly in autumnal nights, as the mind with the predominance of *Sattva*, correctly comprehends the import of the *Vedas* (*Śabda-Brahman*) as decided by the *Pūrva* and *Uttara Mimāṁsās*.

44. The full moon, surrounded by stars, shone resplendent in the heavens, just as Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Yadus, did in his circle of Vṛṣṇi clansmen, on the earth.

45. People, embraced by the (cooling) temperate breeze which has blown over blossoming forests, felt relieved of the heat (of the sun) but not so the Gopa women whose heart was stolen (captivated) by Kṛṣṇa (whom they embraced in their hearts) as the pangs of actual separation were enhanced thereby.

46. Due to the (fecundating influence of the) Autumn, and through the insistent courting of their mates, cows, female deer

1. VB. aptly quotes :
*ūrdhvendriyais tu vikṣepo jñānasyā'dho vināśanam l*
*nirodhe puñja-bhāvena svakāryaṁ sādhayed dhruvam ||*

(or beasts), she-birds and women, conceived (irrespective of their willingness), just as the acts for propitiating the Lord are followed by the concomitant fruit (automatically).

47. At the sunrise all lotuses (except moon-lotuses) bloomed forth, just as all subjects except criminals (or robbers) become fearless on the installation of a king (i.e. restoration of good government).

48. The earth, rich with ripe cornfields, shone bright and beautiful, especially due to the incarnation of the two rays (*aṃśas*) of Lord Hari (viz. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma) and also with the performance of Vedic sacrifices of harvest season (wherein new corn is offered), and with festivities and grand celebrations gratifying the senses, which were carried on in cities and villages.

49. Just as *Siddhas* (the masters of *yoga* and *mantras*—mystic incantations), detained (in their present bodies) by their ordained span of life, attain their respective desired heavenly bodies, when the appropriate time arrives, merchants, sages, kings and *snātakas* (life-long bachelor-students) shut up in their places due to the rainy-season, (and were impeded from undertaking an expedition or journey) now set out to achieve their respective objects.

## CHAPTER TWENTYONE*

*The Song of Gopīs (cowherd-women)*

*Śrī Śuka continued* :

1. In this beautiful forest, with its waters made crystal-clear by the Autumn, and caressed by a breeze surcharged with the fragrance of beds of lotuses, Lord Kṛṣṇa entered deep, along with his cows and cowherds.

* Ch. XIX according to VJ.'s text. He thinks that the object of this chapter is to emphasize that everyone should perform devotion, the means of spiritual knowledge, according to his capacity—

*sva-yogyatānusāreṇa Harau jñāna-sādhanaṁ bhaktiḥ kartavyā |*

2. While grazing the cattle, Kṛṣṇa, in company of cowherds and Balarāma, entered deep into the forests, the lakes, rivers and mountains wherein were resonant with the warbling of flocks of enraptured birds and hummings of bees; through the glades of trees adorned with their floral wealth; and he played[1] charmingly on his flute.

3. When the damsels of Vraja heard from a distance that enchanting music of the flute exciting erotic sentiments,[2] some of them sung unto their friends the excellences of Kṛṣṇa,[3] in his absence.

4. Hardly did they begin to describe when, remembering his dalliance with them, they could not proceed, as their mind was distracted by the vehement force of passion, Oh King.

5. (The cowherd women depict their mental vision of Kṛṣṇa as he entered Vṛndāvana. This visualization of Kṛṣṇa distracted the Gopīs as mentioned in the above verse.)

Possessed of a charming personality like an accomplished actor,[4] graced with a crown of peacock feathers,[5] his ears

1. *cukūja*—(i) played on, sounded—ŚR., VR., SD.

(ii) conveying an erotic invitation to Gopīs—VJ., VB.

2. VB. says that it was a divine music. Hence it could be heard from such a long distance.

3. SG. & VT. carefully exclude elderly ladies like Yaśodā and Rohiṇī from this effect. In them, motherly affection was awakened. While Rādhā being deeply moved conveyed her feelings to her friends like Lalitā. The text of the Bh. P., however, is silent about names of erotically excited *gopīs*, including Rādhā.

4. v.l. *naṭa-vara-vapuḥ*—(i) The most beautiful among all the forms assumed so far by the Lord.—VT.

(ii) Just as an actor puts on a special dress for playing a particular part on the stage, the Lord assumed this human form with this special dress on the stage of the world.—SG.

(iii) By looking at which (form), all beings dance with joy—SG.

5. MR. (Miśra Rāmakṛṣṇa in his com. *Prema-mañjarī*) quotes from *Kṛṣṇa-yāmala*.

*Rādhā-priya-mayūrasya patraṁ Rādhekṣaṇa-prabham /*
*bibharti śirasā Kṛṣṇas tasyāś cūḍānibhaṁ yataḥ //*

A poetic explanation that Kṛṣṇa wore the feathers of a peacock due to the similarity of the 'eye' (eye-like bright bluish coloured centre) of the feather to Radhā's eye.

decorated by *karṇikāra* flowers, clad in garments (brilliant) yellow like molten gold, wearing the Vaijayantī wreath made of flowers of five different colours, (consisting of *tulasī*, *kunda*, *mandāra*, *pārijāta* and *lotuses*[1]) filling the holes of his flute with the nectar of his lips[2] and accompanied by the cowherds[3] singing his glory, Kṛṣṇa entered the Vṛndāvana forest, beautified with his foot-prints.

5A. *VJ's text adds* :

Kṛṣṇa wore a crest of peacock's feathers and appeared as a forest-dweller with Karṇikāra flowers adorning his ears. He rested his face on his left arm (his face was turned to the left). Breathing through the flute with appropriate histrionic movements of eye-brows and fingers, he made all the hosts of cowherds sing classical music (the *Gāndharva Veda* as compiled by Bharata), and gave delight to all the creatures in the world.

6. Listening to the music of the flute which bewitched and transported the hearts of all beings, all the women of Vraja embraced him mentally, as they were (each) engaged in describing it.

*The cowherd women* sang* :

7. "This is the highest reward of being blessed with eyes; we do not know if there can be any greater felicity than this, Oh friends. Those only have enjoyed the fruit who have drunk to their hearts' content (*ni-pītam*) (the charm) of the counte-

1. MR. in his com. (mentioned above) quotes a verse giving names of flowers woven in the Vaijayantī wreath :

*Tulasī-kunda-mandāra-pārijāta-saroruhaiḥ /*
*pañcabhiḥ kusumair etair vanamālā prakīrtitā //*

2. The musical notes issuing from the flute were sweet like nectar to the ear, but this sweetness is transferred poetically to the breath that issued from Kṛṣṇa's lips (mouth)—VB.

3. Balarāma is implied in Kṛṣṇa as that was the inseparable pair.

* It is presumed that the *gopīs*, one after another sing these verses. The names of *gopīs* given in SG or VT are not mentioned in the Text of the Bh. P. The *gopīs* express their eagerness to be with Lord Kṛṣṇa to enjoy his company personally, and each regards herself as unfortunate as compared even with inanimate objects like rivers and Govardhana hill which are supposed to enjoy Kṛṣṇa's melodious music on the flute.

nance of the sons of Nanda as they played on the flute, casting around their loving side-glances at the time of tending their cattle to the forest, along with their cowherd-companions.

8. Picturesquely clad in garments intertwined with tender mango-leaves, with tufts of peacock feathers, and bunches of flowers (decorating the head), and wearing wreaths of lilies and lotuses, and singing[1] and dancing freely sometimes in the midst of the group of cowherds, they (Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma) appeared exceedingly beautiful like actors on the stage.

9. Oh Gopīs ! What infinitely great meritorious acts must have been performed by this flute, in consequence of which it can freely enjoy to its heart's content, the nectar flowing from the lips of Dāmodara (Kṛṣṇa)—which is the legitimate monopoly of *Gopīs*—and leaves but little to others; the rivers (which like mothers nourished with their waters the life of the bamboo of which the flute is made) which enjoyed a part of it, expressed their ecstasy with the blooming of lotuses (like hair standing on their ends with joy). The bamboos (the parent of the flute) like righteous elderly people shedding tears of joy to find a great devotee of the Lord born in their family, shed drops of dew.

10. Oh friend ! Vṛndāvana which has attained the splendid beauty of bearing the imprints of the lotus-feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa,[2] has enhanced the glory of the earth (far above

1. *gāyamānau*—Some times when exhausted they invited other cowherd boys to sing at intervals and exhibited their superiority. The cowherd boys are blessed as they could fully enjoy the singing and dancing of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa who felt shy to do so at Vraja among elderly people. Hence the Gopīs felt that they are extremely unfortunate, as they missed the free exhibition of dancing and singing of Kṛṣṇa—SG.

VT. repeats SG. VB. explains how this Lord's act was full of all *rasas*. His *rasa* theory is beyond the scope of a footnote.

2. The epithet is *Devakī-suta* 'the son of Devakī', and not *Yaśodā-suta* 'the son of Yaśodā'. In fact, the *gopīs* did not know that Kṛṣṇa was Devakī's son, and they presumed that he was Yaśodā's son. The narrator Śuka and members of the audience, knew that Kṛṣṇa was Devaki's son, and hence the author of the Bh. P. who represented that it was Śuka

that of the heaven). While seeing the rapturous dance of peacocks on hearing the music of Kṛṣṇa's flute, which they felt to be deep and low rumbling of clouds, all other animals on the hills stood motionless.[1]

11. Blessed are the female deer which though lacking in reasoning, capacity (due to their birth in animal species) offer, along with their mates, the black-antelopes, their worship to him with their loving glances, on hearing the music of flute played by the picturesquely dressed Kṛṣṇa, the son (or delight) of Nanda (while our cowherd-husbands are too petty-minded to tolerate it, if we do the same).

12. Beholding Kṛṣṇa, whose handsome appearance and amiable disposition were enhancing the delight of women, and listening to the enchanting music played upon by him, celestial damsels moving in the aerial cars (seated on the laps of their heavenly husbands) became infatuated under the spell of the god of love, and had the chaplets of flowers drop down from the braids of their hair, and the folds of their garments slip down and unsettled.

13. And the cows quaffed, with goblets in the form of their ears raised erect, the nectar-like melodious music of the flute flowing from the mouth (i.e. the breath) of Kṛṣṇa, and the calves stood entranced and motion-less[2], holding in their mouth the mouthful of milk sucked from the flowing udders

who reported even this speech of *Gopīs*, used the term *Devakī-suta*, without being aware of the slip. SG., VT., VC defend it by quoting from *Bṛhad-Viṣṇu Purāṇa* that 'Yaśodā' and 'Devaki' are two names of Nanda's wife.

*dve nāmnī Nanda-bhāryāyā Yaśodā Devakītyapi /*

But the quotation is not found in my (*Gita Press*, Gorakhpur) edition of VP. Other annotators accept the epithet *Devakī-Suta* as Kṛṣṇa, and have just ignored the textual slip. SG.'s defence that Devakī merely gave birth to Kṛṣṇa, but he was really brought up by Yaśodā (*suta-śabdena kevalaṁ tayā prasūta eva, putras tu Yaśodāyā eva iti bhāvaḥ*) is merely a cover-up.

1. SJ. interprets the motionlessness as 'swoon due to the impact of divine love' (*Prema-mūrcchā*). This blessed state is not enjoyed even in Vaikuṇṭha. The *gopīs* regret their misfortune of not being transported to that swoon-like state. This shows the unsatiable nature of Divine Love.

2. This is the manifestation of *Sāttvika-vikāra*—SG.

(of their mothers).[1] Through (the medium of) their eyes, they embraced Govinda (Lord Kṛṣṇa), with tears of joy trickling from their eyes.

14. How wonderful! Oh mother! The birds in this forest must most probably be considered as sages, for (just as sages desirous of visualizing Kṛṣṇa follow different branches of the Veda, and perform the duties prescribed therein, without any desire for the fruits accruing from them), the birds are perching on the branches of trees covered with charming fresh foliage (without flowers and fruit obstructing Kṛṣṇa's sight) in order to have complete (unobstructed) view of Kṛṣṇa with un-winking eyes,[2] and to listen to the melodious music of the flute (with full absorbing attention), remaining speechless and oblivious to the external world (like sages happily absorbed in Kṛṣṇa's music or praise).

15. Listening to the music of Kṛṣṇa with wrapt attention, even the (inanimate) rivers exhibited their passion for him, by the whirlpools which thereby diminished the rapidity of their currents (flowing to the sea, their Lord), and (under the pretext of) offering him the present of lotuses, they, with the arms in the form of waves, clasped the pair of his feet, as if to camouflage their act of embracing.

16*. Perceiving[3] that in the heat of the sun, Kṛṣṇa pasturing the cattle of Vraja in company of Balarāma and cowherds, and himself following them playing on the flute, the rain-cloud (due to Kṛṣṇa's being similar to it in complexion and dispel-

1. VJ. (and as an alternative explanation SG. & VT.) regard *snuta-stana-payaḥ-kavalāḥ* an adj. qualifying *gāvaḥ* (cows), and interpret: "With milk flowing from their udders and a mouthful of grass in their mouth". I think the music of the flute enchanted both the cows and the calves, and they forgot even to swallow the mouthful of milk. Hence my translation as above.

2. v.l. *Śṛṇvanti mīlitadṛśaḥ* 'Listening with half-closed eyes'—SG.
"Listen with closed eyes without looking at anything else"—SD.

* VT. states that noticing the effect of the heat of the Sun on the cattle and cowherds, Kṛṣṇa played the musical mode called *mallāra rāga*) (*Megha-malhāra rāga*) on his flute, which effected a shower. It is believed that if this *rāga* (musical mode) is scientifically sung, it brings rain-showers immediately.

3. With its eyes of lightning—VT.

ling heat-like distress of the people) arose and out of overflowing friendliness to him, spread out his body as an umbrella over them, and showered him with flowers[1] (i.e. flower-like showers).

17. Perfectly accomplished of purpose are the Pulinda (including aboriginal and backward class) women who, after being overcome and distressed with passion at the sight of the saffron (colour) sticking to the blades of grass (as well as rocks and other places)—the saffron-paste originally applied to the breast of the Divine Consort[2] (of Kṛṣṇa) and rendered still more charming by its contact with the reddish, lotus-like feet of the Lord of high renown (or whose glory is sung in the *Vedas*)—got cured of those pangs (of having a vision of Kṛṣṇa) by smearing their faces and breasts with that paste.

18. "Alas! Oh friends! Even this mount Govardhana is the foremost among the servants (devotees) of Lord Hari, inasmuch as it derives extremely high delight from the touch of the feet of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, and it receives them with respect, catering to their needs and to those of their (cowherd) friends and cattle, by offering fresh water, good grazing ground, caverns for shelter and edible bulbs and roots.

19. Oh friend! Of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma who tend their cattle from one forest to another along with their young cowherd friends, and characterised by carrying ropes[3] (for tying hind-legs of cows when milking), and string-nooses (for controlling unruly cows), it is, however, wonderful that the sublimely sweet and melodious notes of their flutes cause motionlessness in mobile corporeal beings, and induce bristling with joy (which is a form of motion) among the (immobile) trees."

20. While describing to each other such (fascinating) sports of the Lord who ranged over the forest called Vṛndāvana, the cowherd-ladies became completely absorbed in them (or in him).

1. The flowers of the clouds are the rain-drops— *megha-puṣpaṁ ghana-rasam* quote SG. and VT.

2. VT. insists that she is no other than Rādhā.

3. *niryoga-pāśa* etc.—Extremely powerful bonds or ties created by *yoga*—VJ.

## CHAPTER TWENTYTWO*

*Cowherd-maids Pray to Kātyāyanī—Kṛṣṇa's carrying away their garments*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. In the first month (Mārgaśīrṣa), in the season of Hemanta,[1] maids in the Vraja (cowherd-settlement of Nanda), observed the vow of adoring goddess Kātyāyanī, eating only pure food fit for being offered to sacrificial fire.

2-3. Having taken bath in the waters of the Yamunā at day-break, they made an image in sand of the goddess, just near the river water, on the bank, and worshipped her with sandal-paste, fragrant flowers, offering her propitiatory oblations, burning frank-incense, waving lights before her, and presenting other miscellaneous gifts of varying costs, along with tender shoots, fruits and unbroken grains of rice.

4. Those virgins performed the worship of the goddess, each repeating the prayer (as a *mantra* or incantation) : "Oh goddess Kātyāyanī ! Oh great deluding potency of the Lord ! Oh great *yoginī* (of great Super-human powers) ! Oh absolute ruler of the universe ! Be pleased to grant the son of cowherd Nanda (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) as my husband ![2]

5. The maidens who have set their heart on Kṛṣṇa, observed the vow for the period of a month, worshipping goddess Bhadrakālī with the prayer, "May Nanda's son be our husband".

6. Getting up early in the morning, and calling others by their names (to wake them up), they sang in loud chorus

* It is significant that this episode is not given in the *HVP* and *VP*. The object of this chapter is to demonstrate that devotion alone 'generates' (brings about) the Lord's grace.

*bhaktir eva bhagavat-prasāda-jananīti darśayitum*—VJ.

1. This season consists of the following months of the Hindu calendar—Mārgaśīrṣa and Pauṣa.

2. This Sanskrit verse is regarded as a *mantra* and it is to be repeated 1,600 times a day, during the period of *Kātyāyanī-vrata*—KD.22.62.

VT and VC. quote *Nārada-pañcarātra* to show that every *mantra* about Kṛṣṇa has goddess Durgā as the presiding deity. Hence the justification of this *vrata* and *japa* for getting Kṛṣṇa as a husband.

the glory of Lord Kṛṣṇa, as they went to bathe in the Yamunā clasping each other's hand.

7. On one occasion (on the last day of that vow which was a full-moon day), they, as usual, left their garments on the bank, and singing the glory of Kṛṣṇa, they sported in the water merrily (as that was the concluding day of their vow). Thus they concentrated on him in mind, word and deed).[1]

8. Understanding their intention, the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Master of all other experts in *yoga*,[2] surrounded by his companions,[3] went there to grant them the fruit of their vow.[4]

9. It is traditionally reported that he collected all their garments and quickly climbed a *Kadamba* tree (nearby). Laughing loudly, he spoke to them in fun, while (other) boys also kept a-laughing.

10. "Oh delicate girls! As you are exhausted by observing a religious vow, I am not joking. Earnestly I tell you. Let each of you come here at will, and receive her respective garments.

11. As these (cowherd) boys know it, I have never spoken a lie up till now. Oh girls with beautiful waist (Oh girls of pure hearts)! You may come here one by one or all together, and take your own clothes.[5]

1. *evaṁ mānasa-vācika-kāyikaikatānatvaṁ darśitam*—VT. The poet-annotator KD. says that the maidens imagined the bluish water of Yamunā as the person of Kṛṣṇa and embraced Him (in the form of water) and kissed it etc.—KD.22.84-87.

2. The epithets *bhagavān yogeśvareśvaraḥ* shows that it is the 'eternal metaphysical Lord—the third aspect of the Reality' which is implied here and not the human Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa (vide Intro. XLVIII-XLIX Bh.P. vol. I). KD. underscores the same, "He became many to satisfy them." —KD. 22.99.

3. VT. quotes *Gautamī Tantra* and shows that these companions are 'Intellect, ego, mind, heart'.

4. VB. thinks that the maidens have committed the following faults : nude bath, breaking of silence and playing while observing a vow. To purge them of these, Lord Kṛṣṇa came there and by his look did it.

5. It is the erotically tinged devotion of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas which makes VT. state that Kṛṣṇa was desirous of seeing the central part of their

12. Perceiving (the implications of) his joke, the cowherd girls were overcome with love. Bashfully they looked at each other and smiled, but none came out of the water.

13. When Kṛṣṇa was speaking to them jocularly, the girls got confused in their mind. Keeping themselves immersed in the cold water upto the neck, they requested him, while shivering with cold.

14. "Oh dear Kṛṣṇa ! Pray, do not be unjust to us. Darling ! We know that you, the son of Nanda, are our beloved, whom the whole of Vraja praises. Pray, do return our clothes to us, as we are shivering (with biting cold).

15. Oh beautiful Kṛṣṇa of charmingly bluish complexion ! We are your servants. We all shall carry out your behests. You are a knower of *dharma*[1] (righteous conduct). Pray return our clothes, else we shall (be constrained to) report the matter to the king (Nanda)" (threatened the elderly gopī's).

*The glorious Lord said* :

16. "If you are my servants (as you say), and undertake to abide by my biddings, come here and take back each your (respective) clothes, have a countenance beaming with a smile.

16A. *VJ. and VT. record a half-verse*

Otherwise, I will not return the garments. What will the angry chief do to me ?".

bodies (*yuṣmākam madhyabhāgādisaundaryam eva draṣṭum iṣyate, na ca vastrair etair matprayojanam iti nigūḍho bhāvaḥ*|) It is on the background of Tantricism that this Vaiṣṇavism was developed. Hence the commentator's words should not be superficially understood at their face value in view of note on page 1396. VB. says Kṛṣṇa wanted to see their hearts, interpreting *madhya* as 'heart'. Other annotators have just passed it over. As Kṛṣṇa's physical age was *only six years and four months* at this time, the girls wishing to marry him must have been presumably *less than six years* of age and as such this episode appears allegorical.

1. VB. quotes a *smṛti* text which prohibits the seeing of the secret parts of a girl, sexual act of beasts, a naked woman or one whose breasts are exposed to view :

17. At this, all the girls shivering with cold and covering their private parts with the palms of their hands, came out of the water, frozen (lit. shrunk) with cold.

18. Perceiving their virginity,[1] the glorious Lord who was propitiated with the purity of their hearts, placed their clothes on the branch of the tree and smilingly addressed them, with great pleasure.

19. "It is a positive offence against gods, that you entered water in a nude state,[2] after undertaking the observance of a religious vow. For the expiation of this sin, you bow raising up your folded palms to your heads, and lay prostrate (on the ground) after which you accept your (respective) clothings."

*Additional verses in the Texts of VR and VJ.*

19-A. Hearing this command full of religious significance, from the great Soul (Lord Kṛṣṇa), the damsels paid obeisance to him with one hand, covering their private part with the other.

19-B. Seeing them (violate the proper way of bowing to the Lord), the glorious Lord uttered this observation full of righteousness (and concerning religious formality), "Those who are experts in Vedas know it (and have laid it down) that he who bows to god Acyuta (Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu) with one hand only, should be punished by cutting off the other hand (not used in bowing).

19-C. Hence, a person should pay respects to his Lord by both of his hands. You, therefore, comply that way, and that will please me the better".

20. Considering what was explained to them by Lord Kṛṣṇa (Acyuta), the maids of Vraja realized that taking a plunge (bath) in a nude state is a transgression in the observation of their vow. Being desirous of completely fulfilling the vow, with all the related rites and formalities, they

*Kanyā-yonim paśu-krīḍām nagna-strīm prakaṭa-stanīm nāvalokayet/*
Hence as a knower of *dharma*, Kṛṣṇa should return the clothes.

1. On seeing them arrived—VT.
2. Cf. *na nagnaḥ karhicit snāyāt /*

—*MBH. Anu.* 104.51

bowed to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the very embodiment of the fruit and religious rites, directly present before them. And it was he who washes off all sins, flaws and transgressions.

21. Seeing them bowing down humbly before him, the merciful Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, was pleased with them, and returned to them all their clothes.

22. Though they were badly deceived by the criticism of their nudity (in verse 19), were compelled to give up bashfulness, were ridiculed (by saying that he was not joking (verse 10), were treated like puppets and robbed of their clothings, they were so much satisfied with the company of their beloved that they bore no displeasure towards him.

23. They put on their clothes. So charmed were they with the company of the Lord, and their hearts were so much attracted, that they did not stir away from that place but continued to cast their bashful glances at him.

24. Understanding that their motive of undertaking the observance (of Kātyāyanī) vow was the longing to touch his feet, the glorious Lord Dāmodara (Kṛṣṇa) addressed the maidens :

25. "Oh chaste ladies! Your object (in observing the Kātyāyanī vow) viz. to worship me, is already known to me. It is approved of by me, and it shall be realized.

26. Your desire for my company is not censurable, for your longing to have enjoyment with me will not again lead to a birth in Saṁsāra. A seed once fried or boiled does not sprout.

27. Return to Vraja, Oh girls, as your object is accomplished. You will spend the autumnal nights in enjoyment with me—the object for which you, good ladies, have observed the vow of the worship of Kātyāyanī."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

28. Thus commanded by the Lord, the maidens whose object was accomplished, continued to contemplate in their minds the lotus-feet of the Lord, and returned to Vraja most grudgingly (lit. with great difficulty).

29. The glorious Lord, the son of Devakī, accompanied by Balarāma and surrounded by cowherds, went to a great distance from Vrndāvana, grazing the cattle.

30. Perceiving that the trees served as umbrellas by spreading their shade in the scorching heat of the summer sun, Kṛṣṇa addressed to his cowherd friends, the residents of Vraja:

31. "Oh little Kṛṣṇa, Oh Aṁśu, Oh Śrīdāman, Subala, Arjuna, Viśāla, Ṛṣabha, Tejasvin, Devaprastha and Varūthapa !

32. Have a look at these great blessed souls who live only for the welfare of others, and themselves undergo (for others) the severity of stormy winds, heavy showers, summer heat and snow, and save them off from us.

33. The birth of the trees is verily the most blessed in the world, as it contributes to the well-being of all creatures. Just as no needy person returns disappointed from benevolent persons, so is the case with a person who approaches these for shelter.

34. They fulfil the desires (needs) of others by means of their leaves, flowers, fruits, shade, roots, bark, wood, fragrance, gums or exudations, ashes, coals and tender leaves.

35. That a person should sacrifice his life, wealth, intellect and speech for doing what is beneficial to others, is the farthest limit of the usefulness of embodied beings for their fellow creatures."

36. Praising them (the trees) thus, the Lord proceeded to the Yamunā passing through the avenue of trees whose branches were bent low with clusters of young leaves, foliage, bunches of fruits and flowers and other leaves.

37. Having made their cattle drink that very sweet, cool and healthy water of the Yamunā (to their fill), the cowherds themselves drank that sweet water to their heart's content, Oh king.

38. The cowherd pastured their cattle in the groves on the bank of the Yamunā. Being oppressed with hunger they approached Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa and addressed as follows :

## CHAPTER TWENTYTHREE*

### *Spiritual Emancipation of the Wives of Brāhmaṇa Sacrificers*

*The cowherd boys urged* :

1. Oh Balarāma ! Oh Rāma[1] of extra-ordinary prowess ! Oh Kṛṣṇa, the annihilator of the wicked ! This hunger is sorely troubling us, indeed. It behoves you both to appease it.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

2. When the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, was thus requested by the cowherd boys, he spoke to them with the intention of showering his grace on some Brāhmaṇa women[2] who were devoted to him.

3. "Go to the sacrificial hall where Brāhmaṇas who are reciters of the Vedas (but who do not know the meaning and implications of the Vedic text recited) are engaged in conducting a sacrificial session, called Āṅgirasa, with a desire to attain the celestial region, (after death).

4. After arriving there, tell them the names of my elder brother and of mine, and that you are deputed by us, and request them (to give you some) cooked rice, Oh Gopas !"

5. Being thus commanded by the Lord, they went there, folded the palms of their hands, and lay prostrate on the ground like a staff before the Brāhmaṇas (by way of paying them obeisance), and begged of them :

* This is the XXI chapter in VJ.'s text. The object of this chapter is to emphasize that it is the internal capability and faith that is more powerful and effective in the devotion of Lord Kṛṣṇa and not the scholarship or knowledge of the Śāstras—VJ.

1. The Supreme Brahman—VB. He is so called as *yogins* find spiritual delight in that infinite Supreme Soul characterised by Reality, Bliss and Consciousness. He quotes :

*ramante yogino'nante satyānande cidātmani /*
*iti Rāma-padenāsau paraṃ brahmābhidhīyate //*

2. The singular *bhāryādyāḥ* is used in the sense of the plural or a class, meaning "wives"—VR. VJ.

6. "Oh Brāhmaṇas (the veritable gods on the earth)! Be pleased to listen. We are the cowherds, the servants of Lord Kṛṣṇa. We have arrived here under instructions from Balarāma. May God bless you.

7. Not far from this place, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa are grazing their cows. They are hungry and hence they desire to have food from you. If you have real faith in them, supply them the cooked rice which they seek from you, Oh Brāhmaṇas, the best knowers of *dharma*.

8. Oh excellent-most people, (as you know it), it has been decided in the *dharma-śāstra* that it does not involve any violation (of *dharma*), if food from a person who has been consecrated for sacrifices is eaten, the exception being his consecration for a sacrifice requiring animal slaughter or a *sautrāmaṇi*[1] sacrifice, (when such eating is prohibited)."

9. Cherishing petty longings (viz. life in heaven whence down-fall is certain) yet engaged in elaborate and toilsome acts (of sacrificial procedure), ignorant yet considering themselves as learned and vainglorious of their wisdom, (as they knew not that by the path of devotion which is easier than the path of *Karma* the *summum bonum* is attained) the Brāhmaṇas, though they heard the solicitations of the Lord (who out of Grace sent his friends for food to them), did not care to heed it.

10-11. Looking upon their bodies as their souls (and in their caste-pride), and being of perverted mentality, they looked upon Kṛṣṇa, that Supreme Brahman, the veritable glorious Lord, (the possessor of six excellences), that supra-sensuous Being, as merely an ordinary mortal being, though

1. It is not a *soma* sacrifice but a combination of an *iṣṭi* with an animal sacrifice (*Śatapatha Br.* XII. 7.2.10). Its chief characteristic is offering of *surā* (wine). This is performed at the end of *Rājasūya* sacrifice or *cayana*. This sacrifice frees a son from debt due to his mother. The peculiar thing about *Sautrāmaṇi* is that here wine is offered and the remnants of it are drunk by a Brāhmaṇa hired for that purpose or are poured on an ant-hill.

(*Brāhmaṇam parikrīṇīyād ucchеṣaṇasya pātāram* /
*Āpastamba XIX*, 33)
(*Brāhmaṇaṁ parikrīṇīte grahocchеṣaṇasya pātāraṁ...*
*valmīkavapāyām avanamet* /—*Satyāṣāḍha* XIII-8.28-31)

he really constituted the time and place (of the performance of sacrifices), the substances to be oblated, the *mantras* (for invoking deities), the procedure (prescribed for performing sacrifices), the priests (officiating over the performance), the sacrificial fires, the deities invoked, the performer of the sacrifice, the actual act of sacrificing itself and the religious merits accruing from that sacrifice.

12. As they said neither 'Yes' nor 'No', the cowherds became disappointed, and returning to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, reported accordingly, Oh repressor of enemies.

13. On hearing their words, the Almighty Lord of the Universe burst out laughing, and in order to acquaint the cowherds with the ways of the world, (that beggars are not choosers and that one should try till achieving success), he spoke to them again :

14. "Inform the wives (of those sacrificers—Brāhmaṇas) that I, along with Balarāma, have arrived here. They are affectionate and (with their hearts engrossed in contemplating upon me), they live in me mentally. They will give you (abundant) food, to your heart's content".

15. Thereupon, the cowherds went to the apartment reserved for the consecrated wives of the sacrificers, and saw them decked with ornaments, and seated comfortably there. Paying respects to those chaste Brāhmaṇa ladies, the cowherds respectfully submitted :

16. "Salutations to you Brāhmaṇa ladies ! Kindly listen to us. We are deputed here by Kṛṣṇa who, while wandering, has arrived (here) not far from this place.

17. While grazing the cows, he along with Balarāma and cowherds, has come far afar (from his house). May food be served to him, hungry as he is, along with his companions.

18. The Brāhmaṇa ladies who, due to their hearing (and contemplating over) the stories of Kṛṣṇa, were ever eager and anxious to see him, found themselves in a flurry, when they listened to the (news of his) arrival so near.

19-20. Like rivers flowing towards the ocean, all of them hastened to the beloved Lord Kṛṣṇa, taking with them

in vessels, large quantity of sumptuous food of four kinds,[1] even though they were prohibited by their husbands, fathers, brothers and relatives, for they, having heard of him for a long time, had fixed their hearts on the glorious Lord of hallowing renown.

21-22. There in a grove beautified with the new tender foliage of Aśoka[2] trees, on the bank of the Yamunā, the women (wives of sages) beheld Kṛṣṇa strolling leisurely, surrounded by cowherds, along with his elder brother (Balarāma)—Kṛṣṇa of dark blue complexion, wearing silken garment of golden colour (or a girdle of gold), dressed like an actor decorated with a wreath of sylvan flowers, peacock-feathers and tender shoots, beautified with mineral paints; who rested one of his hands on the shoulders of his trusted companions, and playfully dangling a lotus in the other hand; with lilies gracing his ears and locks of curly hair hanging against his cheeks, he wore a face beaming with smile.

23. They had their minds completely absorbed in him, their most beloved one, the frequent audition of whose excellent glories have rendered completely fruitful the very function (and existence) of the ears, and adorned them like ornaments. Welcoming his arrival through the gates of their eyes into their hearts, they embraced him there for a pretty long time, and got rid of all their anguish and misery (of separation from him), just as the egoistic propensities get submerged after embracing the *prājña*,[3] (the soul, that is ever awake as a witness of sleep) and forget all afflictions.

1. The kinds of food mentioned are :
(1) *bhakṣya*—easily gulpable
(2) *bhojya* —requiring mastication before swallowing
(3) *Lehya* —which is to be licked
(4) *coṣya* —which is to be sucked

2. The pun on *a-śoka* suggests that their grief for their inability to see Lord Kṛṣṇa is now removed.

3. The soul that is ever awake as a witness of sleep.

Kd. : Just as the out-going propensities return and embrace the *prājña* and forgetting all worldly afflictions, merge themselves into sleep. 23.245.

24. The Lord, being the witness of the mind and intellect of all had come to know that they had arrived there solely with the earnest desire of seeing him and had given up all hopes and longings for their husbands etc. (as they came in defiance of the orders of their men-folk) addressed to them with a smiling face.

*The glorious Lord Said* :

25. Welcome—very auspicious is your arrival, Oh highly blessed ladies. Be seated comfortably. What can we do for you ? That you have come with a desire of seeing us (despite the opposition of your men) is really worthy of you.

26. Discerning persons who really understand their self-interest and object in life, engage themselves directly in constant uninterrupted devotion unto me without any ulterior motive, as I am the most beloved Self.

27. Who else can be more beloved than one's own Soul through contact with whom life, vital breath, intellect, mind, body, wives, children, wealth etc. have endeared themselves to us.

28. Now that you have achieved your object in life (of seeing me), please return to the sacrificial hall, where the Brāhmaṇas, your husbands who will successfully complete their sacrificial session with your presence, and their status of being householders depends on you, your being with them.

*The wives of the sages said* :

29. Oh all-pervading Lord (who know everything about us) ! It does not behove you to utter such harsh words. We beseech you to fulfil your own promise (in *Vedas* viz. He, who approaches the Lord does not revert to Saṁsāra,

**VR. Just as after realization of the Supreme Soul the urges and curiosities of seeing him shake off all types of anguishes and eagerness of seeing Him.**

**VJ. : Just as all the absorption of all sense-activities into Prājña, the knowers shake off all their affliction.**

**The basic *upaniṣadic* concept of Prājña is as follows : Prājña is the enjoyer of bliss (*Māṇḍ.* 4.1) of dreamless sleep.**

(*Chāndogya Up.* 8. 15.1). We have approached your feet in defiance of and transgressing the wishes of our relatives and shall wear in our hair the wreaths of *Tulasī* leaves indifferently kicked off at us by you (i.e. have come to serve you even as slaves)."

30. Neither our husbands, nor our parents, sons, brothers, relatives, friends will now accept us (back), not to speak of others. Oh Subduer of the internal foes like passion, avarice etc. !

Now that we have laid ourselves prostrate at the feet of your glorious self, may you be pleased to confer or ordain that state of life (your absolute service or slavery) whereby we shall have no other go to heaven or any other world."

*The Lord said* :

31. Now that you have been commanded to return by me, neither your husbands, nor parents, brothers, sons and others, nor even the public shall scorn you or get angry with you. Even the gods shall approve of it (your act of coming to me).

32. (If you still feel unable to leave me, please note that) Bodily contact among men does not contribute to happiness or love in this world. If you concentrate your mind on me, you will attain to me before long.

*VR. adds*

32-A. Devotion unto me is engendered by listening to my attributes, by visualizing me, by contemplating on me and not so much by physical proximity. Therefore, return to your homes.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

33. Therefore, as directed (by the Lord) the wives of the sages returned to the sacrificial hall. Not only did the sages not expostulate them, but they carried the sacrificial session to a successful conclusion with their help.

34. One lady out of them, who was detained per force by her husband, embraced in her heart the Lord as pictured by

her through what she heard about him, and gave up her body that came to her lot by her *karma* (deeds) in past life.

35. Lord Govinda first made the cowherds feast on the four kinds of that food. The Lord partook of it only afterwards.

36. In this way, the Lord who, out of sports, had assumed a human body and imitated the ways of the world led a sportive life giving joy to cows, cowherds and cowherdessess by his charming personality, sweet words and deeds.

37.* Then remembering (their disgraceful behaviour), the Brāhmaṇas who committed that offence repented, "Alas ! We have disregarded the entreaty of the Lords of the Universe who are imitating the behaviour of human beings.

38. Perceiving the extra-ordinarily supreme devotion of their women in Kṛṣṇa and realizing that they were wanting in it, they were extremely tormented and censured themselves.

39. "Fie upon our three-fold birth,[1] our mastery of Vedic lore ! Fie upon our observance of vows (of continence during sacrificial sessions) ! Fie upon our extensive versatility of knowledge ! Fie upon our spotless pedigree ! Fie upon our expertise in ritualistic technicalities in sacrifice, when we are averse to (*lit.* have turned away our face from) the supra-sensuous Lord Kṛṣṇa !

40. Verily the *Māyā* of the Lord is capable of infatuating even experts in *yoga*. Hence we, Brāhmaṇas, the spiritual preceptors of men, are deluded with regard to our real interests.

41. Oh ! Look at the unfathomable[2] devotion even of

* Here the doubt in Parīkṣita's mind about the goodness of the Brāhmaṇas is cleared up in this verse. The Brāhmaṇas were auspicious by nature, for they were filled with remorse at the offence they committed, when they remembered, "Alas We have scornfully treated the request of the Lords of the Universe who (outwardly) imitate human behaviour."

1. According to ŚR the threefold birth is as follows :

i) Purity of heredity and family (*Śaukla*)

ii) Investiture of the sacred thread and initiation into Gāyatrī Mantra (Sāvitra),

iii) Consecration for Vedic sacrifices (*daikṣa*).

2. Ignorant, weaker sex as explained in the next verse

*duranta-bhāva*—Bond of devotion that brooks no separation—SS.

our women in Kṛṣṇa, the father and preceptor of the world, which cut asunder the bonds of death called the ties of the household.

42. These have not undergone the purificatory rite (known as the investiture of the sacred thread) which is regarded as the second birth (for Vedic and other studies). Nor have they stayed in the preceptor's house (for Vedic studies or Śāstric learning). They have not performed any austerities and have no grounding in the *śāstric* enquiry about the Soul. They are not characterised by any special (spiritual or external) purity or any auspicious or meritorious (sacrificial, or other rites or) acts.

43. Despite these, they entertain such firm and unflinching devotion unto Kṛṣṇa of hallowing renown, the Lord of the experts of *yoga*, a devotion not engendered in us even though we have undergone the purificatory rites (such as the investiture of thread) and have other qualifications (mentioned above).

44. Oh ! How gracious of him it was that although he himself was the goal to be achieved through sacrificial and other activities prescribed by the Vedas,[1] he, through the message sent with the cowherds reminded us[2] (of the futility of all acts if devoid of devotion to God)—who were too stupid to understand our real self interest and were negligent due to household activities.

45. To request food from us who are absolutely under his control, was a mere pretext of the Ruler of the universe who has all his desires fulfilled, and is the master who confers all blessing like bestowing Liberation from Saṁsāra.

46. His solicitation for food was merely a ruse to delude the world, as the Goddess of Affluence, giving up her proverbial fault of fickleness or inconstancy, discards others and seeks permanent resort in him, with the hope of touching his feet at least once.

47-48. He is verily that self-same glorious Lord Viṣṇu who constitutes the time, the place of sacrifice, the substances

1. *or* The refuge or main-stay of the pious saints.
2. *or* : that he has now incarnated for the protection of the good —VR.

to be oblated to fire (e.g. *caru*), the *mantras* (mystical formulae for invoking the deities), the technicalities of sacrificial procedure, the priests (engaged in carrying out various duties in sacrifice) deities to be invoked, the sacrificial fire, the sacrificer, the performance of the sacrifice and the merit accruing therefrom. We have heard that he was born in the Yadu clan. But stupid and deluded as we are, we do not recognize him.

49. How blessed-most we are in having such women as our wives due to whose devotion in him, we too have our minds firmly fixed on Lord Hari.

50. Salutations to You, Oh glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa of unobstructed (all-penetrating) intelligence! As we have our minds deluded by your Māyā, we are wandering in the paths of *Karma*.

51. May that Ancient-most Person be pleased to condone and forgive our transgression, as we, due to our minds being infatuated with your Māyā, the deluding potency, have not been able to realize your prowess and glory.

52. Having thus recollected the sinful offence given by them to Lord Kṛṣṇa by their behaviour of disregarding him, the Brāhmaṇas, though desirous and eager to see the two Acyuta brothers (Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma) did not dare to stir out due to the fear of Kaṁsa.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

### *Prevention of Sacrifice to Indra*[1]

*Śrī Śuka continued* :

1. While living in that very locality (viz. Vṛndāvana, Vraja) in the company of Balarāma, even the glorious Lord

1. The story of Kṛṣṇa's opposition to Gopas' offering a sacrifice to Indra and his advice to offer it to mount Govardhana instead, is recorded in *VP.* 5. ch. 10 and *HV.* 2, ch. 15. These stories show that Kṛṣṇa directly

Kṛṣṇa feigned as if he did not notice the cowherds engaged in preparation for the *Indra-yāga* (worship of the rain-god Indra).[1]

2. Despite his thorough knowledge of it, the omniscient glorious Lord who was the indwelling Soul of all beings, with great humility, enquired of elderly Gopas of whom Nanda was prominent.

3. "May it be told to me, Oh father, what occasion for your hurry and flurry has arrived? (If it be a sacrifice) what is the fruit or purpose of it? Who is regarded as competent to perform it? And with what materials is it to be performed?

4-5. I am desirous of hearing it, Oh father! Please do tell it to me who am eager to learn. For there is nothing worth concealing in the case of the righteous who look upon the self-same soul as abiding in all beings also in the case of those who do not discriminate between people (or things) as their own or as of others (and are of impartial outlook), have no friends, aliens or enemies, and have nothing to hide from others. But to those who retain this discrimination, the neutrals may be avoided as enemies, but a friend or a well-wisher has been

over-rode the older Vedic gods, especially Indra, and that the Kṛṣṇa cult superseded local and contemporaneous divinities including the great god Indra of the Vedic period. Indra's attempt to punish the cowherds by downpour of heavy rains and his final discomfiture by Kṛṣṇa who protected the cowherds with their cattle and other belongings under the umbrella of mount Govardhana lifted by him, show the recession of the Vedic religion and the positive advance of the Kṛṣṇa cult.

The roots of rivalry between Indra and Kṛṣṇa cults go back to the Vedic period, if we are to accept Nīlakaṇṭha Caturdhara's interpretation of *RV.* 5.48.3 given at the beginning of his com. on *HV*, 2. ch.15. It is as follows:

*āgrāvabhir ahanyebhir aktabhir variṣṭhaṁ*
*vajram ājigharti māyini |*
*śataṁ vā yasya pracaran sve dame saṁvartayanto vivartayannahaḥ ||*
*RV.* 5.48.3 (as quoted by Nīlakaṇṭha)

"For (seven) nights, Indra sent down heavy showers like his most powerful weapon *Vajra* on *māyin* i.e. Kṛṣṇa, who had assumed a human form through His *Māyā* Potency, and who made the Gopas to use the materials (collected) for Indra's sacrifice to the sacrifice of mount Govardhana".

1. Cf. *PV.* 5.10.26.

called as one's own self[1] (and as such, nothing should be kept secret from him. I, being such, should be confided with this sacrifice affair).

6. People perform actions with or without understanding the purpose or the fruit of the act. The ignorant persons do not accomplish the fruit of that action (to that extent) as people with full knowledge achieve.

7. May it be clearly explained to me who am inquisitive about it, as to whether your present course of action (viz. performance of sacrifice to Indra) has been undertaken after enquiring into the *Śāstras* or in consultation with friends or is it a mere blind traditional function in the ways of the world.

*Nanda explained* :

8.* The great god Indra is (the presiding deity of) the rainfall itself and clouds are his loving manifestations. They shower water which is the very source of delight[2] and life of all beings.

9. Oh child ! We and other people like us, worship[3] Indra, the ruler of clouds and controller of the world, by performing sacrifices with materials produced with his seminal discharge viz. rain-water.

10. It is on the remnants of the sacrifice that people subsist for achieving their three purposes in life (viz. *dharma*—

1. VJ. explains : one should not keep everything secret from everybody. One should avoid a neutral party as an enemy, but not do so in the case of a friend or a well-wisher who is as good as one's own-self.

* VR. quotes the famous verse which identifies the sun-god with the rain :

*aṣṭau māsān nipītaṁ yad bhūmyāś codamayaṁ vasu /*
*sva-gobhir moktum ārebhe parjanyaḥ kālam āgate //*

But he is under Indra's control and as such, the presiding deity of rain and Indra are identified. The clouds are like so many bodies of Indra. They shower water which is so vital to the life of the people and are a source of strength and happiness to them.

2. v.l.—*prāṇanaṁ* (VJ) "infusing life and activity".

3. VT explains—Otherwise it will be ungratefulness. The 3 P. pl. *yajante* instead of *Vayaṁ yajāmaḥ* is used as Nanda felt abashed before Kṛṣṇa.

righteousness, *artha*—affluence and worldly prosperity and *kāma*—enjoyment of pleasures). The rain-god is the real bestower of fruits to persons who exert in agriculture, industry etc.

11. He who, out of passion, greed, fear or hatred, gives up the customary religious rites handed down by tradition, does not attain his real good.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

12. Hearing the explanatory speech of Nanda as well as that of other residents of Vraja, Keśava (Kṛṣṇa) addressed his father with a view to provoking Indra's wrath (and finally to discomfit him).[1]

*The glorious Lord said* :

13. A being comes into existence only by its own past deeds (*karma*),[2] and passes away through the force of its own *karmas*. It is only through the instrumentality of one's past actions, that the being experiences worldly pleasures, pain, fear or blessings (hereafter). (The favour or disfavour of a divinity is immaterial and irrelevant).

14. If there be any authority like the Supreme Ruler to dispense fruits of actions of others, and if he were to resort to confer fruits of the deeds on the doer of the actions, and he will have no control over him who abstains from committing any act.[3]

15. What power can Indra exercise on beings who follow the course of their actions (and experience the resulting fruit)? He is incapable of modifying its destined course of action of human beings according to their own individual nature. (It is the Almighty God and not Indra who can do it.)

1. Cf. *VP.* 5.10.25.

2. VJ. Here *karma* means Nārāyaṇa as He is the agent of all activities (*Nārāyaṇa eva sarvasya kartetyabhiprekṣya sarvasya kāraṇaṁ karmaivetyāha* /)

3. ŚR. : explains that this is a refutation of those who regard God as dependent on *karmas*. God is untouched by and above all *karmas*. He is the bestower of the fruit of an action to its doer.

VJ. : If it is presumed that there is a Supreme Controller to dispense weal or woe as a result of the *karma* of a person, He will be a mere helper (*sahāyabhūtaḥ*) with no independence of His own.

16. People are the slaves of their Nature and follow their own individual natural disposition and proclivities. The whole world of gods, *asuras* and human beings thus has their being established in nature and follow it.[1]

17. It is through the force of past actions (*karma*) that a being comes by and casts off corporeal forms of a high or low order. It is (nothing but one's Karma that assumes the role of) an enemy, a friend, an indifferent person, a preceptor or the Supreme Controller.

18.* Hence abiding in one's own nature (i.e. following one's natural disposition) one should do one's duty (according to one's own class or position in life), and thus respect (lit. adore) it (one's prescribed *karma*). That deed whereby one can lead a happy (and a successful) life is verily his deity.

19.† A person who, entertaining faith in one god offers services to another, does not attain happiness and welfare, just as an unchaste woman gratifying her paramour, (fails to get prosperity or happiness).

20. A Brāhmaṇa should maintain his livelihood by the study and the teachings of the Vedas; the Kṣattriya by the protection of the earth; a person from the Vaiśya community, by means of *vārtā* (as explained in the next verse); and a Śūdra by rendering service to the twice-born castes (mentioned above).[2]

21. *Vārtā* is four-fold : viz. agriculture, commerce, rearing of cattle and the fourth, usury. As far as we are concerned, cows (the cattle) have been the means of our subsistence.

1. VJ identifies Nature with Nārāyaṇa. The above verses refuse the power to secondary divinities like Indra who are mistaken for the Supreme Lord. It is Nārāyaṇa who is designated by the term *svabhāva*.

* VJ interprets *karma* as Nārāyaṇa and states : One should perform his duty prescribed as such by his *Varṇa* (caste) and *āśrama* (stage in life), and dedicate every thing to Nature i.e. God Nārāyaṇa who is the creator and supporter of the world and is involved in every religious rite. The name of any god whom a being worships (e.g. god Gaṇeśa), denotes as a matter of fact Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself.

† Verse No. 24 in VJ's Text.

2. Cf. *VP* 5.10. 16-31.

22. The attributes called *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* are causes of the maintenance, creation and dissolution of the Universe. It is through *rajas* that the universe of various kinds of things is created by the mutual union of man and woman.

23. It is after being impelled by *rajas* that the clouds shower water all round. By means of these waters people accomplish their purpose (of growing food etc.). What has the great Indra to do with this ?

24. Father ! We have no towns, no countries or territories, no villages or no houses to dwell. We are forever forest-dwellers, living in jungles and on mountains.

25. Therefore, let a sacrifice dedicated for the propitiation of cows, Brāhmaṇas and the mount (*Govardhana*) be instituted. And let this sacrifice be accomplished with the materials collected for the worship to Indra.

26. Let different varieties of sweet dishes from rice, boiled in milk with sugar, down to boiled pulses and various puddings and cakes be prepared and all the milk collected from all the cows be brought together.

27. Let sacrificial fires be properly fed with oblations by Brāhmaṇas who are well versed in the Vedas, and let various food preparations be given to them along with cows, as sacrificial fees.

28. Food should also be distributed to all others upto the *cāṇḍāla*, the low castes and dogs as may be deemed proper. Cows should be supplied with grass and the above mentioned articles of food be offered as *bali* to the mount Govardhana.

29. After taking your meals you put on your ornaments and painting yourselves with sandal-pastes etc. and putting on excellent clothes, circumambulate by the right side to cow, Brāhmaṇas, sacrificial fires and the Govardhana mountain.

30. This is my view and religious belief, Oh father. It may be adopted if it is approved of by you. This type of worship and sacrifice will be liked by cows, Brāhmaṇas, the mountain (Govardhana) itself and by me as well.

*Śrī Śuka said :*

31. Hearing the exposition of (the creed as elucidated

by) the glorious Lord who, as the Time-Spirit was desirous of crushing the pride of Indra, the Gopas headed by Nanda approved of it with words, "Correct, very nice".

32-33. And they carried out everything as Kṛṣṇa, the slayer of the demon Madhu, instructed them. Having got recited the benedictory hymns (and the expiatory rites to avert evil) known as *Svastyayana*, they propitiated with great respect, the mountain (Govardhana) and Brāhmaṇas with those very materials (collected for *Indra-yāga*, the worship of and sacrifice to Indra) and offered grass to the kine. With their wealth of cattle in front of them, they circumambulated the mount (Govardhana) by keeping that mount always on their right.

34. With the gracefully adorned Gopa women singing the exploits of Kṛṣṇa, and with Brāhmaṇas pronouncing benedictions, the cowherds who also wore excellent ornaments, rode their carts with bullocks yoked to them, and went round the mountain keeping it ever to their right.

35. In order so inspire confidence and belief in the Gopas, Kṛṣṇa, on his part assumed a totally different personality. Announcing that he is the mountain Govardhana itself, he with his gigantic body, consumed the enormous quantity of the food offered.[1]

36. Thereupon, along with the inhabitants of Vraja Kṛṣṇa presented salutation to his own other form and exclaimed, "How wonderful ! Lo ! This mountain has manifested himself.

37. This mountain is capable of taking any form he likes, at will. He kills the forest-dwellers who showed disrespect to him. To him let us bow for the welfare of us as well as of our cattle."

38. The Gopas thus carried out the worship of the mountain, the cows and the Brāhmaṇas according to the directions of Lord Vāsudeva and they returned to Vraja along with Kṛṣṇa.

1. Cf. VP. 5.10.47.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

### *Lifting up of Mount Govardhana*[1]

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. Then perceiving that his worship had been stopped, Indra got enraged upon the cowherds headed by Nanda who regarded Kṛṣṇa as their Protector.

2. Being incensed, Indra directed the host of clouds called *Saṁvartaka* which bring about the destruction of the universe. Priding himself as the Supreme Ruler of the Universe he commanded :

3. "Oh ! Look at the astounding audacity and arrogance due to wealth and prosperity of those cowherds who are after all forest-dwellers, but depending on a mortal (called) Kṛṣṇa, have set at nought a deity.

4. Giving up the path of knowledge involving the meditation of the Self or self-realization, they expect to cross the ocean of Saṁsāra or worldly existence with the help of the

1. The hill called 'mountain Govardhana' is 18 miles from Vṛndāvana, in Mathura district. In the village "Paitho", Kṛṣṇa is believed to have held up the mountain on his little finger. This episode is narrated in *VP.* 5 ch. 11 and in *HV.* 2 ch. 18, the latter seems to be an enlarged version. The common verses and repetition of similar expressions in these three works indicate that these three works have used a common traditional bardic source.

Nīlakaṇṭha in his com. on *HV.* 2. 18 quotes the following *Ṛc.* :

*tamasya rājā Varuṇas tam Aśvinau |*
*kratuṁ sacanta Mārutasya Vedhasaḥ ||*
*dādhāra dakṣam uttamam aharvidam |*
*Vrajaṁ ca Viṣṇuḥ sakhivā apoṛṇute||*

—*RV* 1.156.4 (also *Ait. Br.* 1.30 and *Kauṣītaki Br.* 9.6)

Aundh Ed. of RV. reads *Aśvinā* for *Aśvinau*. Nīlakaṇṭha interprets : "Varuṇa and the twin Aśvinikumāras gave their consent to the sacrifice offered to the mountain (Govardhana) at his behest by Viṣṇu. When Indra got angry at the destruction of the sacrifice to be offered to him, to the Wind god and god Brahmā, Viṣṇu held up the mountain that was the recipient of the sacrifice but was capable of offering excellent protection from showers. A friend of all the inhabitants of Vraja as he was, he covered the Vraja with the mountain.

so-called unreliable boats in the form of sacrifices consisting of rituals.

5*. Similarly, taking resort to that garrulous, foolish, arrogant, ignorant mortal Kṛṣṇa who (out of pedantry) regards himself as a great scholar, the cowherds have dared to offend me.

6. Shatter down (lit. shake off) the arrogance of affluence of the cowherds who are puffed with pride of wealth and prosperity and have their minds filled with insolence through the influence of Kṛṣṇa. Destroy all of their cattle."

7**. With a view to annihilate the camp (the cattle-wealth) of Nanda, I shall follow you riding my elephant *Airāvata* and accompanied with the troop of *maruts* of enormous prowess."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

8. Thus commanded and freed (from their bonds) by Indra, the (*saṁvarta*) clouds vehemently harassed Nanda's *Gokula* with heavy showers.

9. Dazzling with flashes of lightning and thundering with the roar of thunderbolts and impelled by tempestuous winds, they showered hail-stones.

10. When the clouds let loose incessant downpour of showers as big as columns (in volume), the earth was inundated with torrential floods of water, and the elevations and the depressions of the ground became invisible.

11. The cattle which were shivering (with cold) under excessively driving showers and tempestuous winds, and the cowherds and their women who were afflicted with severe cold, sought refuge in Lord Kṛṣṇa.

12. Covering their heads and their children (and calves) with their bodies and acutely suffering from the torrential downpour, they approached shivering, to the feet of the Lord.

*. VT.—tries to explain the implied glorification of Kṛṣṇa e.g. *vācālam*—whose word is effective or powerful. *Paṇḍita-māninaṁ*—respected by persons who are *paṇḍitas* or knowers of *Brahman*.

VJ. Kṛṣṇa who is *vācāla* i.e. speaks what is censured by the scriptures and who regards himself as an authority (*Panditamāninam*).

** Cf. *VP.* 5.11.5 and *HV.* 2.18.5

13. "Oh Kṛṣṇa ! Oh highly glorious Kṛṣṇa ! The whole of *Gokula* has none else but you as its protector, Oh Lord ! You are affectionate to your devotees. It behoves you to protect us from the enraged divinity (Indra)".

14. Observing that due to the beating of the volley of the hail-stones, the Gokula had fallen senseless, the glorious Lord Hari came to know that it was the working of indignant Indra.

15. "As the sacrifice to be offered to him has been obstructed by us, Indra is pouring down for our destruction tremendously heavy showers full of hail-stones, accompanied by terrific stormy winds, out of season.

16. Now I shall employ an effective counter-measure through my *yogic* power and remove the *tamas* (darkness) in the form of the arrogance of affluence of the divinities who, through their foolishness, regard themselves as the supreme ruler of the world.

17. It is not desirable that celestials, who are endowed with the quality of *Sattva* (goodness) or devotion to me to a special degree, should be puffed up with the vain pride of being the (Supreme) ruler of the world. The humiliation of these wicked divinities at my hand will work as Grace unto them.[1]

18. With all the *yogic* power at my command, I will, therefore, protect this *Gokula* which has sought shelter in me and has accepted me as their Master and which now entirely depends on me. This is the eternal vow taken by me."

19. Observing thus (to himself), Kṛṣṇa, though a child, uprooted with ease the mount Govardhana with one of his hands[2] and held it up sportively as if it were a mushroom.

20. And quoth the glorious Lord to cowherds "Oh mother ! Oh father ! Oh residents of Vraja. Enter comfortably

1. (i) *anugraha eva*—ŚR
   (ii) Will lead to deeper devotion to me—VJ.
2. with left hand—VT. He quotes *HV* 2.18.31.
   *sa dhṛtaḥ saṅgato meghair giriḥ savyena pāṇinā*

VT.'s graphic description and dramatic narration of this episode deserves perusal in the original.

into the cavity beneath the mountain along with your wealth of cattle.

21. You need not entertain any fear that the mountain will slip down from my hand. Dispel all the fear about storms or (driving) showers, for protection (against them) has been already securely devised."

22. With their minds thus reassured by Kṛṣṇa, they entered into the cavity (beneath Govardhana) along with their wealth, herds of cattle, their dependants (like priests etc.) food-grains etc. according to the accommodation (which was sufficiently available).

23. Being gazed at by those inhabitants of Vraja who disregarded their pangs of hunger and thirst and thus neglected their personal comforts, Kṛṣṇa up-held the mountain for seven days and did not move from his position.

24. Observing the yogic power of Kṛṣṇa, Indra was extremely astounded. Being shorn of pride and thwarted of his design, he restrained his saṁvartaka clouds.

25. Noticing the sky cleared of clouds, the sun already risen and the terrific tempestuous winds and the downpour of hails had ceased altogether, Kṛṣṇa, the bearer of Govardhana, told the cowherds.

26. "Oh cowherds! Now that the stormy winds and showers have stopped and the waters of the flooded rivers have almost receded, you dismiss all your apprehension and go out into the open with your women, children and property (cattle)."

27. Taking with them their respective wealth (viz. herds of cattle) and all the cart-loads of their belongings, the cowherds slowly came out (of the cavity) along with their wives, children and elders.

28. The glorious Lord on his part sportfully placed the mountain on its previous position while all beings stood a-gazing.

29. Overflowing with a flood of affection the inhabitants of Vraja approached him embracing (blessing, smelling the crown of his head and doing such acts expressive of love), according to their position and relations. The cowherd women overwhelmed with affection and joy worshipped him

with curds and unbroken rice (*akṣatas*)[1] and expressed their choicest blessings profusely (out of grateful affection and not out of a sense of seniority as they knew his divine nature).

30. Yaśodā, Rohiṇī, Nanda and Balarāma, the mighty among the mightiest, were overwhelmed with affection and impatience and embracing Kṛṣṇa, they showered him with benedictions.

31. In the heavens, hosts of celestials, Sādhyas, Siddhas, Gandharvas and Cāraṇas sang his glory and out of joy showered flowers on him, Oh king.

32. Commanded by the celestials, conchs and kettle-drums were sounded in the sky and leaders of Gandharvas (celestial *artistes*) headed by *Tumbaru* participated in singing.

33. Oh king! Surrounded by his affectionate cowherd-friends and accompanied by Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa proceeded to Gokula from that place. And young cowherd women, delighted at heart, returned to their respective homes singing all the while such miraculous exploits of Kṛṣṇa (like lifting up of Govardhana) who has captivated their hearts.

## CHAPTER TWENTYSIX

*Conversation between Nanda and Cowherds*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. Witnessing Kṛṣṇa's miraculous feats of this type (such as lifting up of mount Govardhana) the cowherds, being unaware of his prowess, were extremely astonished and coming to Nanda, they spoke unto him (as follows) :

2. "Verily the exploits of this child are extremely marvellous. How does he deserve to be born among rustic people like us—a birth really unworthy and censurable to him.

1. VB. : The cowherd women made a circular mark of curds on his forehead on which some unbroken rice were applied and water was waved round his face and sipped.

3. How is it that a child of seven years as he is, he could hold up with ease (as if in sport) a big mountain on one hand, as an elephant king would do to a lotus (with its trunk) ?

4. Even as the god of death takes life out of the body of a living organism, he, as a babe, with half closed eyes, sucked the breast of the mighty giantess Pūtanā along with her life.

5. While a baby of only one month,[1] when he was made to sleep (and was placed) under a cart, he, while crying and kicking up his feet, turned the cart topsy-turvy by the touch of the fore-part of his foot.

6. While he was an infant of one year and was being carried away through the sky by a demon called Tṛṇāvarta, he killed the demon who was strangled to death on account of being caught by the neck by Kṛṣṇa.

7. On one occasion, when he was tied to a mortar by his mother for stealing butter, he, while crawling on his hands and feet (along with mortar) between two Arjuna trees, made them fall down uprooted.

8. While grazing calves in the forest, he, accompanied by Balarāma and surrounded by cowherd boys, tore open with his hands the bill of the enemy, a demon called Baka (who assumed the form of a heron) with the intention of killing him.

9. He killed the demon Dhenuka who, assuming the form of a calf, was entering the herd of calves with the desire of killing, and *hurling* with ease the (demon's) carcass against a Kapittha tree, caused Kapittha fruits fall down in great number.

10. Accompanied with Balarāma (and possessed of supreme power), he killed the demon in the form of a donkey along with his brethren, he made the forest of palm trees which were laden with abundant ripened fruit, free from fear.

11. Having made the mighty Balarāma kill the ferocious Pralamba, he rescued the cattle and cowherds in the Vraja from forest conflagration.

12. Having subdued the great serpent Kāliya of the

1. *Māsyasya*—some annotators interpret this as 'three months old'.

most virulent poison, he humiliated his pride and expelled him per force from the deep pool (in the Yamunā) and made the waters of the Yamunā free from poisonous pollution.

13. Oh Nanda, all of us, the inhabitants of Vraja cherish for this son of yours undissociable affection. And even he bears towards us all a deep love since his birth.

14. A child of seven and the feat of uplifting and holding up a great mountain ! How inconceivable it is ! Hence we entertain a suspicion (and a fear too) about (the real nature of) your son."

*Nanda replied* :

15. "Oh cowherds ! Hear from me what the sage Garga predicted to me with reference to this boy. And that will dispel all your doubts or fears.

16. 'Assuming different bodies in different *yugas*, He has manifested himself in bodies of three colours viz. white, red and yellow. Now he has adopted a dark-complexioned body.

17. As this son of yours was at first born of Vasudeva in some place (Mathurā), the knowers will call him distinctly as the son of Vasudeva, the Lord of the goddess Śrī.

18. Your son has got so many names and forms suitably designating his excellences and deeds that I do not know them all nor do these people at large.

19. A delight to cowherds and Gokula, he will bring about your weal. And you will easily cross over all difficulties and calamities with his help.

20. Oh Lord of Vraja ! Formerly when anarchy prevailed he protected righteous people who were troubled by the miscreant. Through his protection they prospered and subdued the bandits.

21. Those extremely fortunate persons who cherish affection to him shall not be defeated by enemies even as the partisans of Viṣṇu at the hands of Asuras.

22. Therefore, Oh Nanda, this boy is similar to Lord Nārāyaṇa in excellences, majesty or affluence, glory and prowess. Hence no amazement need be felt at his exploits.'[1]

1. VP.5.13 states that the Gopas directly asked Kṛṣṇa about his feat of lifting up Govardhana, but Kṛṣṇa out of modesty told them that he was one of them and not a superior being.

23. Exhorting me thus directly, the sage Garga returned home. Since then I took upon Kṛṣṇa, the remover of all afflictions, as an *aṁśa* (part manifestation) of Nārāyaṇa."

24. Hearing from Nanda's speech the report of the account given by Garga about Kṛṣṇa's glory and having witnessed and heard personally the great prowess of Kṛṣṇa of infinite energy and power, the inhabitants of Vraja became delighted. They respectfully honoured Nanda and ceased to feel any amazement about Kṛṣṇa's feats.

25. May that Lord of cows be gracious unto us—the Lord who finding that the Gokula with all the cowherds, cows, and women had resorted to him for shelter as they were afflicted by the driving showers of rain, hail-stones, thunderbolts and tempestuous winds let loose by the deity Indra, wrathful at the destruction of the sacrifice (to be offered to him), took compassion on them, and smilingly uprooted the mountain sportively as one would pluck up a mushroom and holding it up on one hand protected the Gokula and thus crushed pride of Indra.

## CHAPTER TWENTYSEVEN

*Indra coronates Kṛṣṇa*

*Śrī Śuka continued* :

1. When Kṛṣṇa held up the mount Govardhana and protected Vraja (Gokula) from heavy showers, Surabhi, the wishyielding heavenly cow, came down from Go-loka[1] to Kṛṣṇa, and Indra too approached him.

*nāhaṁ devo na gandharvo na yakṣo na ca dānavaḥ /*
*ahaṁ vo bāndhavo jāto naitaccintyam ito'nyathā //* — VP. 5.13.12

1. A special heaven for cows. It is above Brahmaloka. Surabhi, daughter of Dakṣa or the divine cow, Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa's companion at Gokula and other eminent devotees of Kṛṣṇa have a place there. This divine world was granted to Surabhi by god Brahmā (MBH *Anu* 83. 29-39). It is described in glorious terms in the same chapter (*Anu* 83. 37-44).

2. Indra who felt abashed at his humiliation (by Kṛṣṇa) met him in privacy (in a solitary place) and touched his feet by his crown brilliant like the sun.

3. Having witnessed and heard the prowess of Kṛṣṇa of immeasurable lustre, energy and power, Indra with his pride of being the ruler of three worlds, subdued, spoke to him with folded palms.

*Indra said* :

4.* Your essential nature consists of absolutely pure *sattva* and as such it is one uniform quiescent existence full of (spiritual) knowledge untainted by *rajas* and *tamas*. This saṁsāra consisting of the stream of *guṇas* which is the product of Māyā has no place in you.

5. Oh Controller of the *Māyā* ! How could greed and other passions which characterise the ignorant and which are both the product as well as the cause of *Māyā*[1] possibly affect you (lit. have a place in you) ? It is, however, for the protec-

*(1) VR. Your abode constitutes of absolutely pure *sattva*, untinged by *rajas* and *tamas* and hence quiescent (free from love, hate etc.). It is attainable through your meditation and worship. This phenomenal existence which is the current of three *guṇas* and their products originates in your will; the causes of the assumption of a corporeal form have no place in You.

(2) VJ. I seek shelter in your Abode (which is verily yourself). In it even absolutely pure *sattva* has no place, what of *rajas* and *tamas*. It is auspicious, constituted of knowledge. The stream of three *guṇas* which is controlled by your will has no place there as it has in *jīvas* due to their attachment. *Māyā* the cause of *guṇa*-current has no place in you.

1. *tad-hetava...tat-kṛtāḥ* :

VR. : Greed and others which are the consequences after assuming the body and the causes leading to other future births.

VJ. : How can the *guṇas* which cause *saṁsāra* be imagined in the Lord.

VJ. further states that the Lord disciplines both the good and the wicked and quotes *Agni P.*

*asatāṁ ca satāṁ caiva Harir evānuśāsakaḥ |*
*satāṁ tu śreyase saiva hyanuśāstir bhaviṣyati ||*

tion of righteousness and the control of the wicked (in their interest and out of grace unto them) that you exercise authority (lit. bear the sceptre for punishing the wicked).

6. You are the progenitor, preceptor and Supreme controller of the worlds. You are the undefiable Time-spirit who hold the rod of punishment.[1] It is for the welfare of the world that you act, manifesting yourself at will, your (sportive) forms and crushing down the pride of those who fancy themselves to be the masters of the world.

7.* Noticing your fearlessness and formidability in times of stress and peril, ignorant fools like me who prided themselves to be the rulers of the world, immediately shed off their arrogance, and getting rid of their egotism, betake themselves to the path of righteousness. In this way your sportive acts are meant for the punishment and discipline of the wicked as well.

8. Oh Ruler of the world ! It behoves you to pardon me—your offender, who was puffed up with the pride of my affluence and was totally ignorant of your prowess. Oh Lord ! May not the intellect (and mind) of a stupid fellow like me become so wicked (and perverse) again.[2]

9. This incarnation of yours in this world is for the destruction of those powerful army-leaders who are themselves a burden to the earth and whose birth has become a source of troubles to others, and for the prosperity of the followers of the feet of your Lordship. (As such, I, being your servant, deserve pardon and mercy even though I have committed a grave offence against you, Oh Adhokṣaja—Lord beyond the ken of sense-perception).

1. VB. By assuming forms of a father, preceptor and god of death you inflict punishment for the good of the people. VB. enumerates the incarnations e.g. the Fish, Tortoise etc. as representing the father, the preceptor etc. but does not completely illustrate it.

* When, at the end of our lives, we see your fearful form, we shed off our pride immediately and take to the noble path of *bhakti* consisting of remembering the name of the Lord, applying *gopīcandana*, wearing a wreath of *Tulasī* etc.—VB.

2. VT. cautions us that Indra did not pray this with a sincere and pure heart and he behaved the same way at the time of taking away the *pārijāta* tree.

10. Obeisance to you, a glorious God, who reside in the hearts of all and who are still too great-souled to be discerned;[1] you Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva and the Lord of Sātvatas.

11. Salutations to you who assume a form to comply with the wishes of your devotees; who are the embodiment of absolutely pure knowledge; who are all-pervading, the seed (the primary cause) of everything and the indwelling[2] soul of all beings.[3]

12. Oh Lord ! Flying in blind rage at the interruption of the sacrifice offered to me, I did this for destroying the Gokula, with heavy showers and stormy winds.

13. With my pride crushed and efforts to destroy Gokula frustrated, I have been favoured by you, Oh Lord. I have sought shelter in you, Oh Supreme Ruler, Preceptor, nay, my own soul itself.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

14. Thus extolled highly by Indra, the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa, replied to him laughingly, in a voice deep like the rumbling of clouds, as follows :

*The Lord said* :

15. Oh Indra ! Highly intoxicated as you were with the pride of the majesty of Indra-hood (kingship of the celestials), it was out of grace unto you that I interrupted the sacrificial worship to be offered to you, so that you should ever remember me.

16. Out of those who have grown blind with the arrogance of supreme power and affluence and do not recognise me as the wielder of the rod of punishment, I deprive that person of his position and wealth unto whom I condescend to show grace.

1. *antaḥsthe' pyaparicchinnāya*—ŚR.

2. You are the cause and controller of everything but are not identical as a Substance—VR.

3. Here God's being embodiment of *sat* (Existence), *cit* (Consciousness) and *ānanda* (bliss), bestower of the wishes of the devotees and having a form constituted of pure knowledge are emphasized—VB.

17. You may now return, Oh Indra ! May all be well with you. Carry out my commandments. All of you should continue in your respective offices (and execute your duties) diligently without being puffed up with pride or haughtiness.

18. Paying respects, along with her progeny (cows), to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord in the guise of a cowherd, the noble-minded Surabhi (the celestial cow) submitted to him :

*Surabhi said* :

19. Oh Kṛṣṇa ! Oh great *yogin* ! Oh Inner controller of the Universe ! Oh Creator of the world ! Oh Immortal Lord ! We are now blessed with a Lord in you as the protector of the world.

20. Oh Protector of the World ! You are the only Supreme Deity to us. Hence for the prosperity and success of cows, Brāhmaṇas and gods as well as of saintly persons, you be our Ruler (Indra).

21. As per directions of god Brahmā, we are going to crown (lit. give coronatory ablution to) you as our Supreme Ruler (Indra). You have incarnated for lightning the burden of the earth, Oh Inner Soul of the Universe.

*Śri Śuka said* :

22-23. Praying Kṛṣṇa with these words, Surabhi, the celestial cow, consecrated him by sprinkling her milk on him, while Indra, accompanied by gods and sages and instructed by (Aditi and other) mothers of gods crowned him, bathing him with waters of the heavenly Gaṅgā brought by the celestial king-elephant Airāvata, with his trunk. He proclaimed Kṛṣṇa, the descendant of Daśārha as 'Govinda'.

*Indra said* :

23A*. I am the Indra of gods. You have attained the Indrahood of the cows (cattle). People will sing of you as 'Govinda' in this world.

* Yande's Bombay edition adds this verse in the footnote *Bh. P* vol. 7 p. 397.

24. Gandharvas, Vidyādharas, Siddhas and Cāraṇas headed by Tumbaru, Nārada and others arrived there. They sang of Hari's glory that washes off all the sins of the world. Overwhelmed with joy, celestial damsels danced beautifully.

25. The prominent ones among gods glorified him and showered him profusely with wonderful flowers. At that time, all the three worlds attained the Zenith of felicity while the cows drenched the earth with their milk.

26. Rivers flowed with various kinds of delicious drinks; the trees exuded sweet honey profusely. Bumper crops were harvested from unploughed lands and mountains exhibited precious stones (on their outward parts instead of concealing them in mines).

27. When Kṛṣṇa was crowned, all animals, though cruel and ferocious by nature, shed off their enmity.

28. Having thus coronated Lord Govinda (Kṛṣṇa) as the Protector of cows and *Gokulas*, Indra, with the permission of Kṛṣṇa, went to the celestial world in the company of gods.

## CHAPTER TWENTYEIGHT

*Nanda rescued from Varuṇa*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. On the *Ekādaśī* day (the eleventh day of the lunar fortnight, so sacred to devotees of Viṣṇu) Nanda observed complete fast and worshipped Lord Viṣṇu (Janārdana). On the twelfth day, Nanda entered the waters of the Yamunā for performing ablution.

2. Nanda, being ignorant of the time reserved for the demons, entered the waters during night time. A demon (*asura*) servant of Varuṇa seized Nanda and produced him before Varuṇa.

3. Not seeing Nanda, the cowherds cried out, "Oh Kṛṣṇa, Oh Balarāma". Hearing the cry and knowing that his father had been carried off to Varuṇa, the Omnipresent Lord, who affords protection to his devotees, approached Varuṇa.

4. Seeing that Lord Kṛṣṇa (the Ruler of senses) had arrived, Varuṇa, the protector of the world, was highly enraptured and worshipping him respectfully submitted :

*Varuṇa said* :

5. "Today (the object of assuming) my body has been fulfilled. Though I am the Lord of ocean, which is a mine of precious stones, never before such a treasure-trove was found by me as today.

[*VR. adds* :

By the very sight of you, Oh omnipresent Lord, the (purpose of my) eyes and tongue have become fulfilled.] Those who resort to your feet achieve the end of their journey (of *saṁsāra*).

6. I salute you Oh glorious Lord, the Brahman himself and the Supreme Soul wherein the very name of the Māyā, the cause of creation of the various worlds, is not even heard of.

7. Your father has been brought here by my ignorant servant who did not know the limits and nature of his duty. It behoves your Lordship to pardon him.

8. Oh Kṛṣṇa ! The witness of everything in the Universe ! Be pleased to shower your grace on me. Oh Govinda, full of filial love ! This is your father. He may be taken back."

[*VR. adds* :

We have been fortunate to see you as your father has been brought here. We are your progeny (or subjects). It behoves you to be gracious unto us, despite our offences.]"

*Śrī Śuka said* :

9. Thus propitiated by Varuṇa, the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Ruler of rulers, took his father with him and returned, thereby bringing delight to his kith and kin.

10. Nanda was struck with wonder at the affluence and grandeur of the protectors of the world which he had never witnessed so far, and also the submissiveness of the Lokapālas to Kṛṣṇa—with amazement he related everything to his relatives.

11. Thinking him to be the Almighty Lord himself, the cowherds whose minds were still more overwhelmed with eagerness and wonder, thought (to themselves) : "Would that the Supreme Lord grant unto us his imperceptible state (called Brahman) and take us to his eternal region ?"

12. Knowing the wish (cherished at heart) by his own people, the all-perceiving glorious Lord, out of his own accord, and out of grace, began to think with a view to accomplishing their desires.

13. "While wandering in this world in higher and lower forms of existence due to the force of the Nescience, desire and actions (*karma*), people verily do not know their own fate."

14-15. Considering this, the highly compassionate, glorious Lord Hari manifested to the cowherds his own realm which is beyond the range of *tamas* and his essential nature which is absolutely real, not subject to modification or destruction but is pure consciousness, infinite, self-luminous, eternal and perfect stage which is realized by the sages after transcending the trinity of *guṇas* (when the bondage of *guṇas* is severed).

16. They were at first transported to *Brahmahrada*[1]—pool-like deeply absorbed state in Brahman—and were made to plunge into it and were eventually taken out of it (i.e. were awakened from that *samādhi* or trance). There they beheld the divine region of Brahman by the Grace of

1. ŚR.'s 1st explanation : *Para-Brahman* is the pool in which the cowherds were made to remain immersed in a trance and again roused from the *samādhi* by Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Kṛṣṇa through which formerly[1] Akrūra also saw the divine abode.

17. Beholding in that realm Kṛṣṇa being extolled by personified Vedas in different hymns, Nanda and others were filled with supremely ecstatic delight and were greatly amazed as well.

## CHAPTER TWENTYNINE

*Lord Kṛṣṇa's Rāsa[2] with Gopis*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. Perceiving that those (indescribably beautiful and hence proper for indulging in delightful sports[3]) nights were

ŚR.'s 2nd explanation: The pool in the Yamunā wherein the Akrūra beheld the *Brahma-loka* (vide infra chs. 39.40-55) is also called *Brahma-hrada*. Although ŚR gives this alternative explanation that they were taken to this pool in the Yamunā by Kṛṣṇa and were shown *Brahma-loka* that is not complementary to the Almighty Lord Kṛṣṇa. Hence ŚR.'s first explanation is accepted.

1. ŚR. explains : "The word *purā* is used as the incident took place before the dialogue between Śuka and Parīkṣit took place."

2. *Rāsa* or *hallīsaka* is a dance in which one male dancer plays his part with a number of female dancers moving in a circle. Jīva Goswāmī quotes in BKS.

*nartakībhir anekābhir maṇḍale vicariṣṇubhiḥ /*
*yatraiko nṛtyati naṭas tad vai hallīsakaṁ viduḥ //*

Ch. 20 in HV. 2 is titled *hallīsaka-krīḍanam* in stead of *rāsa*. This *rāsa-krīḍā* forms a part of VP 5.13, but the *rāsa-pañcādhyāyī* which begins from this chapter is poetically superb. SG. calls these "five vital breaths"- *pañca-prāṇa-tulya-pañcā'dhyāyī*. These five chapters form the corner-stone of the warm, sensuous *madhurā bhakti*. Commentators of Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism such as Sanātana Gosvāmī, Jīva Gosvāmī have grown ecstatically lyrical and have given full play to their poetic imagination. Vallabha also is at his best while annotating these chapters. These annotators have written so exhaustively (over and above the implication of the actual wording of the text) that it cannot be compressed here, as it will be an independent book by itself to include them all.

For the significance of *Rāsa-līlā vide* Intro. pp. XLIX-LIV.

3. *tā anirvacanīyāḥ sarva-kālataḥ śreṣṭha-tarāḥ paramānanda-rasamayīs tat-krīḍāyogyā ityarthaḥ /*

beautified with full-blown jasmines of the autumnal (*śarad*) season, even the glorious Lord, in exercise of his Supreme *yogic Māyā* potency[1] made up his mind to play (*rāsa*).

2. Like a lover, returning after a long absence (would make the face of his beloved blush into crimson-red by the touch of his hand as if he) painted the face of his beloved with

1. *Yogamāyā upāśritaḥ* : in the company of Rādhā—SG. equates Rādhā with *yogamāyā* as follows:

*yogasya sambhogasya māyo mānam paryāptir yasyām sā yoga-māyā śrī Rādhā—SG*

"Rādhā in whom was the highest accomplishment of enjoyment"
—SG

VJ : exercising his own essential powers.

Various conjectures are expressed by annotators why Lord Kṛṣṇa exercised his yogic Māyā Potency. He used it (1) to hypnotize the minds of people in Vraja, (2) to devise a flute capable of attracting Gopa woman (Vaiṣṇava-Śaraṇa's *Siddhāntārthadīpikā*), (3) to supply the necessities of such a dance in a forest (SD.,also Rāmanārāyaṇa's *Bhāvābhāva-vibhāvikā* etc.

KD : Kandarpa, the god of love, who subdued all gods like Hari, Hara and Brahmā was elated with pride. His pride was humiliated by Kṛṣṇa in this *rāsa krīḍā* (29.57-59). KD. raises the usual moral problem of playing with women married to others and explains the words *yogamāyām upāśritaḥ* as "without touching the wife of another man, he enjoyed himself in his natural essential bliss", and quotes *ātmārāmo pyarīramat* The Lord was the subduer of the god of love (*Manmatha mathana*) and under the pretext of eroticism, these five chapters lead to the stage of spiritual renunciation (29.63-68). Dhanapati-Sūri in *Bhāgavatag ūḍhārthadīpikā* endorses ŚR's view that this *Pañcādhyāyī* leads to renunciation from *saṁsāra*.

Here two currents of interpretations become obvious in the various annotations in the Vrindavana edition, one endorsing *madhurā bhakti* and the other (including ŚR., VJ.) advocating the usual non-erotic *bhakti*.

SG : As soon as the desire to play with Gopīs arose in the mind of Kṛṣṇa, the moon (the hero) was actuated with the same desire towards the Orient (the heroine), the stars being their attendants. By his balmy beams he removed the distress not only of the Orient but also of other people of the trouble caused by the autumnal sun's heat.

VJ : *carṣaṇī*—The plant-world.

BKS : Although he loved all the Gopīs of Vraja and removed their distress, he daubed the face of Rādhā with saffron paste even though he was ever present with her (*priyayā saha dīrgham sārvakālinam darśanam yasya svādhīna-bhartṛkatvāt*)

saffron-paste by his extremely soothing hands, the lord of stars—the moon—arose presently making the face of the orient blush into crimson-red by his balmy beams, (simultaneously) mitigating the distress of the people caused by the scorching heat of the sun.

3.* Beholding the moon, the friend of lilies (which blossom at the touch of his rays) in full orb, reddish like fresh saffron, superbly resplendent like the countenance of goddess Lakṣmī and seeing the groves (of Vṛndāvana) lit up with its soft rays, he breathed forth such melodious music through his flute as to captivate the hearts of the beautiful-eyed Gopīs.

4. Hearing that music which increased their love for him (or rather "which enhanced their forgetfulness about their own person"[1]), the damsels of Vraja whose hearts were

Or: *dīrgha-darśana*—of large eyes. Dhanapati in *Gūḍhārtha dīpikā* : The moon was the predecessor of Kṛṣṇa. He painted the face of the Orient (which is legally Indra's direction) with his soft balmy beams and advised (by his example) Kṛṣṇa to do the same with Rādhā who was another man's wife and remain above sin like himself.

VB. : The moon is the presiding deity of the mind and he naturally emulates whatever arose in Kṛṣṇa's mind. *carṣaṇī*—Faculties. These were concentrated in highest bliss.

* VT. informs that the place where the *rāsa* play took place is known as *Rāsaulī*. SG. and VT. emphasize that all adjectives or adjectival phrases used in this verse show that the time, place etc. were quite proper and opportune for love-making.

VB. The moon, the presiding deity of the mind, was the brother of Lakṣmī and as such had facial similarity with her. And he appeared reddish like Lakṣmī's countenance at the time of her marriage awakening eroticism. He quotes a śruti text : "Women love a singer" and states that Kṛṣṇa invited all beautiful maidens of Vraja by the sweet notes of the flute.

1. *anaṅga-vardhanam*—The usual translation following annotators will be "Increasing the feeling of love of Gopīs for Kṛṣṇa is not complimentary to Gopīs or Kṛṣṇa. The word *anaṅga*—means 'bodiless'. The Gopīs were so much engrossed in Kṛṣṇa's devotion that they practically forgot themselves. This forgetfulness about their person was so much enhanced by listening to the flute-call that they left their work then and there and ran to him. Even an exponent of *madhurā bhakti* like SG., warns that the word *anaṅga* is not used in a vulgar sense : *grāmya-dharma-hetu-prākṛta-kāmāṁśābhāva-vivakṣayā.*

captivated by Kṛṣṇa, unmindful of what the other was doing, arrived hastily with their (gold) ear-rings dangling through their fast gait, at the spot where their Lover was waiting.

5. (Even hearing the name of Kṛṣṇa instantaneously makes his devotees renounce all other activities and hence the Gopīs left their work half-done as follows :)

Being extremely eager (to join the Lord), some who were milking cows, went away leaving the milking half-done; others started, placing the milk (for heating) on the oven to boil (without removing it from the oven), while others flew to Kṛṣṇa without removing the dressed dish (of wheat flour) from the hearths.

6. Some who were serving food (to the members of their family) left off without serving (any further); some others suckling their babies set them aside and fled; some others who were waiting upon their husbands suddenly stopped and departed; while others who were taking their meals, set aside their food and started.

7. Some were painting their bodies (with pigments, sandal paste), while others were cleansing their person, still others were applying collyrium to their eyes, while others were bedecking themselves with clothes and ornaments in a disorderly[1] way—All hastened to the presence of Kṛṣṇa (leaving their work half-done in the middle).

8. Though prevented and obstructed by their husbands, fathers, brothers and relatives, their hearts being lured away and robbed by Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Gopīs were hypnotised and they did not return.

VB. understands the destruction of the gross body and the creation of a new one by the word *anaṅga*—

*aṅgaṁ tu nāśayatyeva ato nūtana utpannaḥ /*

1. This is technically known as *vibhrama*. SG and VT quote the famous characteristic :

*Vallabha-prāpti-velāyāṁ madanāveśa-sambhramāt /*
*Vibhramo hāra-mālyādi-bhūṣāsthāna-viparyayaḥ //*

When the time of arrival of the Lover approaches and the mind is overwhelmed and confused with the passion of love, the wrong or disorderly way of wearing clothes and ornaments is the characteristic of *Vibhrama* (confusion).

9. Some being shut up in the inner apartment, could not manage to get out. They closed their eyes and meditated upon Lord Kṛṣṇa with their minds absorbed in his devotion.

10-11.* Their inauspicious *karmas* being consumed by the fire-like intense agony of unbearable separation from their dearest Lord, and with their auspicious *karmas* being exhausted by the ecstatic bliss of the embrace of the Immortal Lord enjoyed in their meditation on him, the cowherd women who became united with[1] that Supreme Soul, even as a beloved would do with her paramour,[2] and with all the *karmic* bonds of mundane existence being instantaneously sundered off, they cast off their mortal coil constituted of three *guṇas*.

*. VJ. explains that even *sañcita karma* (Potential *karma* which did not begin to give its effect) is destroyed by the knowledge and realization of God.

SG. The Gopīs lost all the bonds of hopes of participating in the *rāsa* by retaining their bodies (as pointed out in the *Bhāgavatāmṛta*). There is more intense joy in separation from a lover as it gives rise to more fervent love.

Alternately SG. explains: By their attachment (*saṅgam āsaktim*) to the Supreme Lord as their paramour, they, by their suffering intense agony at the unbearable separation from their dearest Lord, destroyed the inauspicious sufferings of three types (physical: elemental etc.) of the world and had enhanced the auspiciousness of the world (*akṣīṇamaṅgalaḥ—akṣīṇaṁ puṣṭaṁ vṛddhiṁ gatam, jagatāṁ maṅgalam*) by their bliss of the happy embrace of Lord Kṛṣṇa attained by them in their meditation, gave up the various states of mind (*Bhāva*).

SG concludes : Liberation (*mokṣa*) is attained by knowledge, attainment of the region of Vaikuṇṭha, by loving devotion of the Lord; the Lord is won over by *sakhya prema* (friendly affection); by intensity of love and always regarding him as the dearest Lord, leads to union with him at Vraja.

1 *Saṅgata*—Who properly realized Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Lord —VJ.

2 VT. raises the point whether the Gopīs united with the Lord as a paramour (in illicit sexual relations) and ably refutes the moral charge. It is the intensity of passion of a beloved for the paramour which is implied here.

12.* They (the damsels of Vraja) knew him only as a Supreme Lover and could not recognize him as the *Brahman* himself. How did the cessation of the flow of *guṇas* (in the form of continuity of the cycle of birth and death, take place in the case of those women whose minds were under the influence of *guṇas*.

*Śrī Śuka explained* :

13. It has been previously[1] explained to you that as Śiśupāla, the king of Cedis, attained the *summum bonum* (absorption in the person of Lord Kṛṣṇa), there is no problem at all how the beloveds of the Supra-sensuous Lord should do so.

14. Even though the Lord is not subject to any modification or change; is beyond the ken of intellect, and infinite; transcends all the *guṇas* yet controls them; he manifests himself for the good (Final beatitude) of people.

15. Persons who always cherish love, anger, fear, affection, identity and friendliness unto Lord Hari, ultimately attain one-ness with him.[2]

*ŚR correctly explains the nature of Parīkṣit's doubt. The husbands or sons of those Gopīs were, as a matter of fact, *Brahman* himself. But as they had no knowledge or capacity to recognize that *Brahman* in them, they could not attain Liberation (*Mokṣa*). Similarly they did not look upon Kṛṣṇa as the *Brahman* but only as a Lover. Hence how could their association with him be the cause of *Mokṣa* ?

SG. endorses the question raised above by ŚR. but adds : To the Gopīs or devotees, *Mokṣa* (Liberation) is quite insignificant as they were more interested in the excellences such as superb beauty, sweetness, love etc. of the Lord. He, however, clarifies that King Parīkṣit had personally no such doubt, but it is for the knowledge of others that he asked this question.

VJ. explains in the next verse that Liberation (*Mukti*) is attained by direct realization through uninterrupted devotion, but not due to *Kāma* (desire, sexual or otherwise). If *kāma* is amalgamated with *Bhakti* (devotion), it brings in the Grace of the Lord. But this love of the Supreme Being cannot be regarded as the paramour-beloved relation. (It seems VJ. treats Vr. 11-13 as a unit and explains the *api* in v. 11 as implying this explanation.

1. Vide Supra 7. 1-30.
2. VR and VJ reject the notion of *Mokṣa* as absorption of the

16. It does not behove your Majesty to entertain such feeling of wonder in the case of the birthless glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Ruler of all the masters of *yoga*, through whose Grace, the entire (mobile and immobile) creation gets emancipated (from *saṃsāra*).

17. Seeing that all the damsels of Vraja[1] have approached him, the Lord who was the foremost among the eloquents, addressed them, hypnotising them with the most fascinating or loving expressions.

*The glorious Lord said*[2] :

18. Hail to you, Oh highly blessed ladies ! You are welcome. What pleasant services can I render to you ?[3] Is everything well with Vraja ? Please explain to me the cause of your hasty arrival.

19.* Oh ladies with beautiful waists ! This night is of frightful appearance. It is infested with ferocious beasts (and demons). Please do return to Vraja. This place is not fit for women to stay out at night.

individual soul with the Supreme Soul. Naturally VR interprets *tanmayatām yānti* as "attain similarity to Him"—*tat-prakāratāṁ tat-sādharmyaṁ yānti*

VJ. states that due to cherishing Love etc. for the Lord, the souls of such persons become saturated with those very feelings even in the final stage, but they do not become identical with Hari.

*Harau kāmādikaṁ vidadhata upāsate te tan-mayatām yānti kāmādyātmatām āpnuvanti, na tu bhagavan-mayatām.*

1. All women of Vraja young and old who should have stayed at Vraja instead of coming into the forest—SG.

2. SR : Noticing that all the damsels of Vraja have hastened there in an agitated state of mind, Kṛṣṇa expresses anxiety and asks.

SG. : Kṛṣṇa pretends indifference.

VB. : In the following ten verses Kṛṣṇa wards off the *tāmasa*, *rājasa* and *sāttvika* categories of characters in the following order : *tāmasa*-cum-*sāttvika*, *tāmasa*-cum-*rājasa* and *tāmasa*-cum-*tāmasa*.

3. By serving the cause pious ladies like you, I shall attain special merit—SG.

* SG. explains the *double entendre* thus :

This full-moon-night is delightful to people (*janān rañjayati ti rajanī*). (Due to absence of darkness) it is quiet and beautiful in appearance (*aghora-rūpa*). It is inhabited (and visited) by beautiful creatures (*a-ghora-*

20. Not seeing you in Vraja, your mothers, fathers, sons, brothers and husbands must be searching for you. Do not create fear and anxiety in your relatives.

21. You have now seen how the forest is adorned with floral beauty and illuminated with the silvery beams of the full moon, and beautified with the tender foliage of trees dancing sportively with the gentle breeze blowing from the Yamunā.

22. Oh ye virtuous ladies! Please return to Gokula without delay. Wait upon your husbands as ideal wives. Your children and calves are crying, suckle them and milk the cows.

23. Or if you have come as your heart is attached to me out of deep affection to me, it is quite natural (that you should have done so) for all creatures are affectionate to me.

24. But it is the supreme duty of women to wait upon and render service to husbands with sincerity of hearts, to look after the well-being of relatives and to nourish children.

25. The husband may be ill-natured or quarrelsome unfortunate, decrepit with age, dull-witted, sickly or penniless but women desirous of the heavenly world should not desert him if he be morally not fallen.

26. Resorting to illicit intercourse with a paramour by women of noble families, is a hindrance to the attainment of the heavenly world; it is scandalous, base, fraught with miseries and dangers, and it is abhorred everywhere.

27. Devotion to me is truly engendered by hearing about me, by looking at me, by meditating upon me and glorifying my sportive and noble deeds, and not by physical proximity. Therefore, please return home.

*sattva-niṣevitā*) like deer and peacocks (which awaken erotic sentiment), or it is being enjoyed by a person like me who am quiescent and pleasant by nature (*aghoraṁ sukhadaṁ śāntam svabhāvaḥ yasya tena mayā niṣevitā*) Therefore, please do not go back to Vraja (*pratiyāta Vrajaṁ na*). As you are beautiful women, you please stay on here (*ihāstheyam*).

*SD* : As you have by chance come here, please return. It is night time, it is not desirable that women should stay with me now.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

28. Having heard that unpleasant speech of Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd women grew despondent as their expectations were frustrated, and they were immersed in deep anxiety out of which they could not extricate.

29. With their faces down-cast (in disappointment), and their *Bimba*-like red lips parched with hot breaths of grief, scratching the ground with their toe-nails and washing the saffron-painting on their breasts with tears mixed with collyrium, they stood silent, heavily burdened with distress.

30. The Gopīs who discarded all their cherished desires for his sake, and who were still deeply attached to him, wiped out their eyes sore with weeping, and with their voice chocked up with anger resulting from frustration, and in faltering accents, they addressed to their dearest Kṛṣṇa who talked to them as if he bore no love to them.

*Gopīs urged* :

31. "It does not behove, you, Oh Omnipresent Lord, to speak so harsh to us, your devotees, who have renounced all objects of enjoyment and have resorted to the soles of your feet. Pray do not abandon us your earnest devotees but accept us as does the Deity (Viṣṇu), the most ancient person, accept his devotees desirous of Liberation from Saṁsāra.

32. Knower of the principles of righteousness as you are, it may be as you say it, that the natural duty of women is to attend upon and render service to their husbands, children and friends or well-wishers. May this be so in the case of you, Oh dear Lord, who are the origin and object of such precepts. For, you being the Soul, the most beloved relative of all embodied beings, are dearest to all.[1]

1. KD. explains that just as a coin of the highest denomination contains within it the coins of lower denomination (e.g. a rupee consists of one hundred paise. When you possess a rupee you have with you one hundred paise, similarly) when you, who are the soul of all creatures, are served well, other beings like husbands, sons etc. are automatically served properly. You form the basis of our desired objects as well as their accomplishments. This being the case, enough of your precepts of *dharma*

33. Persons who are well-versed in *dharma* direct all their love (and devotion) to you, Oh *ātman* (soul) of all. For when you, the eternally dear Lord are available, what purpose can be served by husbands, sons and other relatives who are nothing but a source of trouble. Therefore, Oh Supreme Ruler ! Be pleased to be gracious unto us, Oh Lotus-eyed God !

34. Our heart which uptil now used to be engaged happily in our homes, has been easily enticed away by you; so too our hands which were occupied with our domestic work. Our feet refuse to move away a single step from the soles of your feet. Under these circumstances, how can we return to Gokula and (even if we are carried there) what possibly can we do there ?

35. Extinguish, Oh darling, with the flood of the nectar of Your lips[1] the conflagration (of passion) set ablaze in our hearts by you, with your beguiling smiles, sideglances and melodious music, otherwise, with our bodies consumed by the fire of separation, we shall, by meditating upon you (like *yogins*), attain to the position of your feet.

36. Oh lotus-eyed Lord who are affectionate and favourable to persons (like *yogis*, sages and cowherds like us) who dwell in forests ! Since the moment we happened somewhere (at some unknown place) to touch (but once) the soles of Your feet which are the delight of goddess Lakṣmī[2] we have been blessed by You and are now not at all able to stand before any other person, Oh dear Lord !

37. Although Śrī (the goddess of affluence and beauty) —to bask in whose favourable glance (at least once), gods make strenuous efforts,—has already secured a place on your bosom, she still aspires with Tulasī (the presiding deity of the

1. SG. clarifies that the fire of passion set ablaze is so intense and enormous that it requires a *flood* and not sprinkling of the nectar-drops for extinguishing it.

(ii) *SG.'s second interpretation* : Let the nectarine flood of your lips be crystallized into words and let it enter our ears and put out the fire of passion enkindled in our hearts.

2. Or which condescend to give (occasional) opportunity of touching the goddess Lakṣmī.

basil plant) and loves to secure the dust on Your lotus-like feet which it is the privilege of Your servants to enjoy. We also have similarly sought the dust under Your feet.

38. Do be propitious unto us, You soother of all afflictions. It is with the hope of (getting the opportunity of) adoring You that we quitted our homes (like *yogis*) and have approached the soles of Your feet, Oh adornment of mankind ! Grant us who are burning with intense longing, excited by Your charming smiles and enchanting glances, the privilege of serving You.

39. Looking at Your countenance covered with curling locks of hair, with cheeks shining with refulgent earrings and with lips full of ambrosia, and with sideglances accompanied by charming smiles, and beholding Your mighty arms reassuring protection (to Your devotees) as also Your bosom that excites passion in the heart of goddess Śrī, we would like to be Your menial servants (lit. your slaves).

40. Oh darling ! Breathes there a woman in all the three worlds who would not swerve from the noble path approved by the elite, when (she happens to be) enchanted with the ravishing melodious (modulations of the) music of Your flute and (chances to be) be-witched by gazing of Your form, the most charming in all the (three) worlds, even a glance which sends a thrill of joy through cows, birds, trees and beasts.

41. It is certain that your honour has specially incarnated for dispelling the fear and afflictions of Gokula even as the First Divine Person—god Viṣṇu—did as the Protector of the Celestial Region. Therefore, Oh friend of the distressed, place Your lotus-hand on love-fired breasts and (aching) heads of Your maid-servants."

*Śrī Śuka continued* :

42. Listening to the piteous prayer of the Gopīs, the Ruler of the Masters of Yoga laughed loudly. Although he was ever-revelling in his own self, out of mercy and grace he conferred bliss on them.[1]

1. VB. emphasizes the aloofness of Lord Kṛṣṇa who Himself being immersed in His own spiritual bliss, proceeded to delight the Gopīs (with no personal involvement).

43. With their countenances blooming under the gaze of their beloved Lord, the Gopīs gathered around Lord Kṛṣṇa (Acyuta) of glorious deeds, whose charming smiles radiated the splendour of his jasmine-like teeth. And he looked like the full moon surrounded by stars.

44. Being praised in songs (by the Gopīs) and himself bursting into a loud song, Lord Kṛṣṇa, adorned with the Vaijayantī wreath and leading a bevy of hundreds of beautiful damsels, wandered over the forest, gracing it (with his hallowed and charming presence).

45. Surrounded by Gopīs, he entered the cool sandy bed of the river and sported with them, while pleasant gentle breezes cooled by (their contact with) the waves of the Yamunā and charged with the fragrance of water lilies (blooming by the moonlight) were blowing.

46. Exciting amorous sentiment in the beautiful damsels of Vraja by stretching out his arms, embracing them, touching their hands, locks of hair, thighs, waists, bosom, by indulging in jokes and by pricking them gently with his nails, by his sportive glances and smiles, Kṛṣṇa gave delight to Gopīs.

47. Recipients of such a high honour from the noble-souled Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Gopīs got puffed up with pride and (each one of them) regarded (herself) as superior to all other women on the earth (in beauty).

48. Perceiving their conceit at their fortune (of being associated with the Lord) and their pride (of being the most beautiful woman), Lord Kṛṣṇa disappeared then and there, for curing them of that pride and showering Grace on them.

## CHAPTER THIRTY*

*Search after Kṛṣṇa*

*Śrī Śuka continued* :

1. When the Lord suddenly disappeared, the damsels from Vraja, like she-elephants which have missed the leader of their herd, were deeply distressed, when they could not see him.

2. With their hearts captivated by the graceful movements, loving smiles, lustful glances as also by delightful discourses, amorous dalliances and frolics of the Lord of goddess Lakṣmī (Kṛṣṇa), those young damsels mentally identified themselves with him and began to emulate his various acts and sports.

3. Identifying themselves with Lord Kṛṣṇa and exhibiting Kṛṣṇa's sportful movements and amorous dalliances, the Gopīs, the beloveds of their darling (Kṛṣṇa), whose persons had become (as it were) the duplicates (of Kṛṣṇa) in deportment, graceful smiling, glancing, speech etc., declared (to each other) "I am Kṛṣṇa."

4. Singing aloud of Kṛṣṇa's glory in a chorus, they sought for him, like lunatics, from forest to forest, enquiring of trees about that Lord (the Supreme Man) who, like ether, was pervading all the creatures from within and without.

5. "Oh Aśvattha ! Oh Plakṣa ! Oh Nyagrodha ! (varieties of Indian fig trees). Have you seen the son of Nanda who has absconded, stealing away our hearts by his captivating smiles and bewitching glances ?

6. Oh Kurabaka, Aśoka, Nāga, Punnāga and Campaka trees ! Did the younger brother of Balarāma who humbles the pride of proud women by his smiles pass this way ?

7. Oh blessed Tulasī (Basil plant) to whom the feet of Lord Govinda (Kṛṣṇa) are so dear ! Have you seen Acyuta, so very beloved of you, wearing you (in a wreath) swarming with bees.

* This is ch. No. 28 in VJ. This ch. shows that none but Lord Hari by His nature possesses all *yogic* powers. It also shows the intensity of devotion of the Gopīs—VJ.

8. (Addressing various flowering trees) Oh Mālatī ! Oh Mallikā ! Oh Jāti ! Oh Yūthikā ! Was Mādhaya (Lord of Lakṣmī, Kṛṣṇa) seen by you giving you delight by the touch of his hands, while passing by the way ?

9. (Invoking other trees) Oh mango tree (of the *cūta* variety) ! Oh Priyāla, Panasa (Jack-fruit tree), Asana, Kovidāra, Jambū (Rose-apple tree), Arka (the sun plant), Bilva (the wood-apple tree), Bakula, Āmra (a variety of mango tree), Kadamba and Nīpa trees and other trees on the bank of the Yamunā—Born as you are for the benefit of others ! May you direct the path of Kṛṣṇa to us whose minds are vacant (due to separation from Hari).

10. What austere penance have you performed, Oh Earth, inasmuch as you appear resplendent with your hair standing on their ends through the thrill of joy, at the touch of the feet of Keśava (Kṛṣṇa) ! But is this ecstasy due to (the touch of) Kṛṣṇa's feet just now or is it due to your being best-ridden (formerly) by Lord Trivikrama (Viṣṇu, as Vāmana who covered the universe in three steps) or is it caused by the embrace of the Lord when incarnated as a boar (even before Vāmana-incarnation) ?

11. Oh female deer ! Here is permeated the fragrance of our leader's—Lord Kṛṣṇa's—garland of Kunda flowers tinged with (the scent of) saffron applied to the breast of his lady-love (when he hugged her). Did Kṛṣṇa pass this way along with his beloved, giving delight to your eyes by his graceful limbs Oh friend ?

12. (To trees which bent low with the load of fruits) Oh trees ! Did the younger brother of Balarāma, placing one (i.e. left) hand on the shoulder of his beloved and holding a lotus in the other (i.e. right) hand (to protect his beloved by warding off) the swarms of bees attracted by (the fragrance of) Tulasī and blinded by the intoxication (caused by the fragrance) which followed him—did Kṛṣṇa (ever) come here and was pleased to accept your low bows with glances full of affection (and appreciation) ?

13. (Oh friends !) Ask these creepers which have embraced the arms (i.e. branches) of their husbands, the trees, as they certainly exhibit the thrill (sprouts or flowers) of joy at

the touch of his finger-nails while plucking a flower for his beloved)."

14.* Thus the cowherd women became bewildered in their vain search of Kṛṣṇa and raved in this way. With their hearts engrossed (and as if identical) with him, they began to emulate the divine sports of the Lord.

15. One of the Gopīs who imitated Kṛṣṇa sucked the breast of another Gopī who played the part of Pūtanā. Another Gopī emulating Kṛṣṇa, the baby, began to cry and kicked another Gopī who acted the part of a cart (*Śakaṭa*).

16. Acting the role of a demon (viz. Tṛṇāvarta) carried away another Gopī who behaved like an infant Kṛṣṇa, while a third crawled on all fours dragging the feet and thereby making a jingling sound of the anklets.

17. Two Gopīs enacted[1] the role of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa while others played the part of cowherds. Out of them one struck a third gopī that played the part of *Vatsāsura* (a demon in the form of a calf), while another (acting as Kṛṣṇa) struck another (fourth) Gopī who enacted the role of the demon Baka.

18. One imitated Kṛṣṇa shouting out at cows from a distance, while another emulated him and played upon the flute, while others applauded her saying "Well done."

19. Another Gopī who mentally identified herself with Kṛṣṇa placed her arm on some other Gopī and while following her, told the other "Lo ! I am Kṛṣṇa. Look at my graceful gait."

20. "Don't be afraid of tempestuous winds and (driving) shower. Protection against them has been provided by me". Saying so, another Gopī strained herself and held up (a part of) her garment with one hand (as if it were the mount Govardhana[2]).

21. Treading on the head of another Gopī and mounting thereon (one Gopī) ordered, "Now that I, the wielder of

*VJ.'s text does not include 10 verses from this verse (i.e. vv. 14-23 both inclusive).

1. Historical present is used in some of these verses but for consistent use of tense, past tense is used in translation.

2. Cf. VP. 5.13-28.

the rod of punishment to the wicked, have incarnated, get out from this place, Oh wicked serpent."[1]

22. (Imagining that all the Gopas are surrounded by forest conflagration and to vouchsafe their protection) another Gopī said, "Oh cowherds ! Lo that raging forest fire. Shut up your eyes quickly. I shall speedily accomplish your welfare (rescue from fire)."

23. Tied to (a Gopī who represented) a mortar with a wreath by another (Gopī who acted the part of Yaśodā).

23-A* ["Now I bind the thief who has stolen butter and broken a number of (earthen) pots"]. And the lady with beautiful eyes (who was thus bound) covered her face (with hands) and feigned fear (put up a show of trembling with fear).

24. While they were enquiring of the creepers and trees of Vṛndāvana about Kṛṣṇa, they noticed in a certain part of the forest, the foot-prints of the Supreme soul (Kṛṣṇa).

25. "It is obvious that the footprints are definitely those of the noble-souled son of Nanda, as they are identified by the marks such as a flag, a lotus, a *vajra*, a goad and a barley seed"[2]

26. While they went ahead tracing his path by following those footprints, the poor women were sorely distressed at heart to find them interspersed with those of a young woman and spoke to each other.

27. "Whose foot-prints possibly these can be? Who can be this woman who walked in his company with his hand resting on her shoulder, even as a she-elephant with the trunk of her mate on hers.

28. Certainly the Supreme Ruler, the glorious Lord Hari, has been propitiated[3] by this lady. Hence, being pleased with her, Lord Kṛṣṇa took her to a rendezvous abandoning us all.

1. Cf. VP. 5. 13. 27.

* VR's text adds this half-verse.

2. Cf. VP. 5.13-32.

3. SG. : Here the name of that Gopī is Rādhā is indicated by the text : *rādhayati ārādhayati iti śrī-Rādhā iti nāmakaraṇaṁ darśitam'*. Although the text of the Bh.P. is silent on this point, all commentators of the Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism presumed that she was Rādhā and have written interesting extensive commentaries on these verses.

29. Oh friends ! How blessed are the particles of dust under the Lotus-feet of Lord Govinda—the particles which god Brahmā, Śiva, and goddess Lakṣmī bore on the crowns of their head, for absolving themselves of the sins (which separated them from him. Let us do so, so that by placing the dust on our heads we shall be united with Kṛṣṇa).

30. But these foot-prints of hers cause distress to our hearts inasmuch as only she (out of all Gopīs) has stolen away Kṛṣṇa (who belongs to all of us) and enjoys his kisses in a secret place.

31. But here her foot-prints are not visible. Most probably, seeing that the tender soles of his beloved's feet are pricked with sharp and pointed blades of grass, her darling Kṛṣṇa has carried her on his shoulders.

31 A.* These foot-prints have been sunk more deeply (in the soil) as he was carrying the young woman. Have a look at these foot-prints of love-lorn Kṛṣṇa (obviously) weighed down under a heavy load.

31 B. (Going a few paces ahead, they observe :) It appears that here he set her down for gathering flowers (for putting them in her braid of hair).

32. (Proceeding still further) Here flowers are gathered by the Lover for his beloved. Behold these foot-prints which are not entire as he stood on tip-toe.

33. (Most probably) on this spot the lust-ful Lord has performed the decoration of the hair of his lady-love. He must have certainly taken his seat here for fastening the flowers in her braid.

34. It is with a view to demonstrate to the world the wretched plight of the love-stricken as well as the stone-hearted nature of women that the Lord sported with the lady even though he is ever delighted in his own blissful self, self-sporting Perfect Person unattracted by the amours of women.

35-36. Showing to each other the traces of Kṛṣṇa's foot-prints in this way, the Gopīs wandered in a despondent mood (concentrating on Kṛṣṇa). And the Gopī whom Kṛṣṇa

* 31-A Not found in the Text of ŚR and VB.

(in preference to other Gopīs, and) leaving others in the forest, had brought there, now began to regard herself as the most beautiful of all women. Thought she to herself, "the beloved Lord resorts to me only, abandoning all other Gopīs who too love him."

37. Thereupon, after going to a certain place in the forest, she, being affected with pride, told Śrī Kṛṣṇa, "I am not able to walk any further. Therefore (give me a lift and) take me whither-so-ever you please".

38. When requested thus, he told his beloved, "Mount on my shoulder" and he disappeared. And the lady lamented in repentance.

39. "Oh Lord! My darling! Oh most beloved one! Where have you gone? I am your miserable slave. Be pleased with me to reveal your Presence, Oh mighty armed Lord!"

40. While the (other) cowherd women went on tracing the path of the Lord, they noticed from a distance, their distressed friend bewildered through her separation from her darling.

41. Listening to her report as to how she was received with honour by Mādhava (Kṛṣṇa) and was humiliated by him through her own wickedness, they were extremely astonished.

42. They further probed into the forest (for Kṛṣṇa) so long as the moon-light was available. Seeing that darkness was setting in, they returned from that spot.

43. With their minds absorbed in him, they talked about Kṛṣṇa only; they imitated his movements and sang about his excellences. They became oblivious of their persons, as well as of their homes.

44. Returning to the sandy bank of the Yamunā, the Gopīs contemplated on Kṛṣṇa only. Anxiously waiting for his arrival, they sang of Kṛṣṇa in a chorus.

## CHAPTER THIRTYONE[1]

### *Gopis' song*[2] *(prayer for Kṛṣṇa's return)*

*Gopis sang* :

1. It is due to your birth here that the goddess of affluence and beauty (Lakṣmī) abides here permanently and the Vraja outshines in progressive prosperity. But dear Lord ! We, your beloveds, who have with difficulty managed to be alive for your sake (in the hope of visualizing you) are searching for you in every direction. Be pleased to reveal yourself to us, Oh darling.[3]

2. Oh Lord of amorous enjoyment ! Is this not killing us *en mass* by disappointing us, your gratuitous maid-servants, with your eyes that surpass (lit. steal) the splendour of the interior of a beautiful full-blown lotus in a translucent lake in the autumn, Oh Bestower of boons ?

3.* Oh mighty Lord (lit. Bull among men) ! We have been so often protected by you from death through drinking of poisonous water, from Aghāsura, the demon disguised as a boa-constrictor, from heavy showers, stormy winds and the fire of lightening, from the demon[4] (Ariṣṭa) in the form of a bull) and from the son of Mayāsura (the demon Vyoma)[5]

1. Ch. 29 in VJ.'s Text. According to VJ, this chapter shows that for those who are not eligible to study the *Vedānta* and yet aspire after *Mokṣa*, singing His glory is the way of propitiating the Lord. It brings about His Grace. This chapter describes Gopis' (women, not eligible to Vedic studies) way of propitiating the Lord. The Gopis are addressing Kṛṣṇa directly, as He is all the while present in their hearts.

VR. The request for revelation may be treated as the burden of the song.

2. This is not a chorus but one Gopī after another (or one group of Gopis after another) is expressing herself.

3. SG. states modestly that he explains the "crumbs" of the noble-soul ŚR who has deeply drunk the essence of the nectarlike song. SG quotes a Prākrit verse (Text corrupt) which means that a beloved does not survive her separation from her lover, but as their lives are entrusted to Him, they are alive.

*In VJ.'s text, ŚR's 6th verse is 2nd and ŚR's 2nd verse as 3rd.

4. Vide infra 10.36.16

5. Vide infra 10.37.28

and from perilous situations all over. (Why are you so indifferent to us now ? We still hope to secure your protection.)

4*. Oh friend ! As a matter of fact you are not the son of a Gopī (Yaśodā) but you are the witness, dwelling in the soul (i.e. hearts) of embodied beings. When prayed by god Brahmā for the protection of the universe, you appeared in the clan of Sātvatas (or the family of devotees). (Hence, it is improper for you to show indifference to your devotees).

5. Oh Leader of Vṛṣṇis ! Place on our head your lotus-like palm that graciously assures protection to those who resort to your feet through fear of *saṁsāra*—Your palm which bestows all desires and has espoused the hand of Śrī, the goddess of prosperity, Oh Beloved.

6. Oh Mighty Hero ! The Annihilator of the afflictions of the inhabitants of Vraja ! Oh friend whose beguiling smile humiliates the pride of your people (votaries) ! Be pleased to accept us who have been your bonded servants. Show unto us—poor women—your charming lotus-like countenance.

7. Be pleased to place on our bosoms your lotus-feet which totally dissipates the sins of those who prostrate themselves (in complete submission) at them (your feet) that (affectionately) follow the herbivorous animals (cows), which are the abode of Śrī, the goddess of beauty and prosperity, and which were placed on the hoods of the serpent Kāliya—and thereby remove completely the pangs of passion from our hearts.[1]

The anachronism is obvious. SG. defends it by saying that Gopīs developed omniscience due to their devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Hence, these future acts are quoted here. VB asserts that Gopīs being omniscient, the chronological sequence is not binding on them!

*. This is verse 5th in VJ. (as per Vṛndāvan edt.).

VJ : You are verily the delight of the Gopīs, Oh friend ! For the protection of the universe you have appeared in the family of Yadus (i.e. Sātvatas). You are the Inner Controller of all embodied creatures and witness to all (or you are ever realizing your ownself). You are worshipped by god Brahmā, the creator or the preceptor of the Universe.

1. ŚR, VR & VJ unanimously explain *Kṛndhi hṛcchayam* as *Kāmaṁ chindhi*—'cut down, destroy the passionate love in our hearts'. VB's imaginative explanation is interesting. For example—The Gopīs submit : 'Our breasts are not soft but you have trodden upon the hard hood of Kāliya. We may be uncultured but your feet followed cows. The request is made by all Gopīs and hence plural *kuceṣu*.

8. Oh lotus-eyed Lord ! With your melodious words consisting of charming expressions delightful (and appealing even) to the minds of the wise and with the nectar from your lips, revive us who are charmed with you and are swooning for you—and are but your slaves doing your biddings, Oh Valiant hero !

9. (We did not die of separation from you but are alive due to listening to your nectarlike stories).

Highly meritorious (due to their liberality in the previous existence) must be those persons[1] who extol your nectarlike stories which are not only life-giving to the afflicted but are superior to the nectar (itself), inasmuch as, they are highly eulogized by the knowers of the Brahman (to whom nectar is negligible) and which remove all sins, are the most auspicious to hear, and the source of all prosperity and are spread all over the world.[2]

10. Darling Kṛṣṇa ! Your hearty laughs, your loving oglings, your sports and pastimes so auspicious to contemplate on, and your enchanting jokes and acts in privacy all go down into our heart and agitate it, Oh Deceitful Love !

11. Oh Loving Lord ! When you go out of Vraja to graze the cattle, our heart gets agitated (with the thought that) your lotus-like beautiful feet will be pricked and pained by the gravel and stubs and blades of grass, Oh Darling.

12. When at the close of the day you now and then present your countenance overhung with dark-blue curly locks of hair, soiled with the dust raised by cows (in the forest), it appears like a lotus (surrounded by black bees and overstrewn with pollen), and thereby you provoke the passion of Love in our hearts (and do not satisfy it) Oh Cheat !

13. Oh delightful Enchanter ! Pray be pleased to place on our bosom your lotus-feet, bestowers of desires[3] to prostrating supplicants, worshipped by the lotus-born deity,[4] the very ornament of the earth (enhancing its beauty by footprints),

1. They are the most liberal persons on the earth (ŚR.)

2. *or* Those who sing of your glory broad-cast all over the world are the most munificent donors.

3. VB—*Kāmaṁ dyati khaṇḍayati* cuts down, removes *kāma*

4. God Brahmā—ŚR; goddess Lakṣmī—SG.

the most blissful ones which ought to be meditated in times of distress, Oh Remover of mental anguishes.

14. Oh Hero![1] Pray, condescend to grant to us the nectar of your lips which enhances the charm of amorous enjoyment and destroys all griefs—the nectar which has been enjoyed fully by the flute kissed by you in sounding, making people forget all other passions and attachments.

15. During day-time, while your Lordship is away wandering in the woods, and we are not able to see you, even a quarter of a moment is felt by us as an age. (But when you return in the evening we feel that) god Brahmā must be dull-witted in creating our eye-lashes which, while winking, deprive us even for a moment of the joy of looking at you, when we are eagerly gazing at your beautiful countenance, graced with curly locks of hair.

16. Oh crafty Deceiver! Who would abandon poor women like us who, being enchanted by the loud melodious music of a musical expert like you and who know that we are sure to come to you—us who have completely set at nought our husbands, children, followers, brothers and relatives and knowing your way, have sought your presence, Oh Acyuta!

17. Remembering your secret amorous promises and beholding your smiling countenance provoking the passion of love in our heart, your loving glances, your broad chest, the abode of Śrī (goddess of affluence and beauty), our hearts get excited with excessive longing every now and then, and becomes infatuated.

18. Darling Kṛṣṇa! Your incarnation is for dispelling the sins and miseries of the inhabitants of Vraja (viz. Gopas) and of the forests viz. sages, as well as for conferring the highest auspiciousness on the universe. Be pleased, therefore, to impart to us who entertain a strong yearning for you in our hearts, something of that balm (of your company) which will relieve all the mental anguish of your people (votaries).

19*. As your Lordship constitutes our very life, our

1. Hero in erotics—SG.
Hero in munificent gifts like *puruṣārthas*—VB.
*Deleted in VJ's text.

mind reels to think whether your lotus-feet on which you wander in the forest, are not pained while walking on the gravels etc., for (on our part) we, being afraid (of injuring your tender feet) place them gently on our hard breasts, Oh tender Darling !

## CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

*Kṛṣṇa comforts Gopīs*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. In this way (as described in the previous chapter), the Gopīs, yearning strongly to see Lord Kṛṣṇa went singing loudly, wailing loudly and at times raving incoherently, they wept loudly and piteously, Oh king.[1]

2. And (surprisingly enough) in their very midst appeared Lord Kṛṣṇa, the descendant of king Śūra, with his lotus-face beaming with smile, wearing a yellow garment, adorned with a wreath of flowers, capable of fascinating the god of Love (cupid) himself (with his charm).

3. Seeing their belovedmost Darling arrived,[2] all those women, though emaciated and weak at once sprang to their feet, with their eyes wide open with rapturous delight, even as the limbs of the body do on the return of the vital principle (*Prāṇa*).

3-A. *VR.'s Text* :

The more they drank the nectarine beauty of his countenance with the drinking vessels (in the form) of their eyes, the more unsatiated they grew (lit. they were not satiated at all), just as men of spiritual wisdom feel about his feet.

1. The beginning of the chapter shows that just as the Lord manifested Himself to the Gopīs, He reveals himself to the possessors of spiritual means of getting divine wisdom—VJ.

2. SG. quotes VP. *tato dadṛśur āyāntaṁ vikāsi-mukha-paṅkajaḥ* and states that Kṛṣṇa revealed himself at a distance and then approached the Gopīs. The above quotation is not traceable in the Gītā Press etc. of VP.

4. One of the Gopīs, in her ecstasy, clasped the lotus-hand of Kṛṣṇa with her palms, while another placed on her shoulder his arm smeared with sandal-paste.

5. Another slim and emaciated Gopī received in the hollow of her palms, the betel chewed by him, while another Gopī, feverish with love, placed his lotus-feet on her bosom.

6. Being beside herself with the agitation of unrequieted love, another Gopī knitted her eyebrows and continued to bite her lip and was looking at him as if she was subjecting him to a volley of side-glances.

7. Another Gopī gazed at his lotus-face with fixed unwinking eyes. Although she drank (his nectar-like face) to the full, she did not feel satiated like saintly persons who are never satiated serving his feet.

8. A certain other Gopī got him established in her heart through the pupils of her eyes, and closed the eyes (so as to prevent his exit). Then she (mentally) embraced him, and through that thrill, had all her hair standing on their ends like a *yogin* immersed in spiritual bliss.

9. All of them became satisfied and happy by the high festival of having the look of Keśava (Kṛṣṇa) and had their fever born of separation subsided, just as people do when they attain God-head or meet a person who has realized the Brahman or who reach Prājña in deep sleep.

10. Surrounded by the ladies who had shed off their sorrow (due to the separation from the Lord), the glorious immortal Lord Kṛṣṇa shone more brilliantly like the Puruṣa (Supreme Spirit) endowed with his spiritual powers[1].

11-12. The Supreme Lord repaired with them to the sandy bed of the Yamunā where swarm of blackbees were attracted by the gentle breeze charged with the fragrance of fully blossomed jasmine and *Mandāras*. The darkness of the night where-of was dispelled by flood of rays of the autumnal

1. These are variously enumerated by different commentators :
(1) ŚR—(a) *Sattva, rajas* and *tamas*
(b) spiritual knowledge and (physical and mental) strength essential for meditation.
(2) VR. : 24 *tattvas* forming the part of the astral body of a *jīva*.
(3) VJ. : various forms of Lakṣmī attending upon the Lord.

moon, rendering the scene all the more delightful; the soft sands whereof were (evenly) spread by the handlike ripples of the Yamunā[1]. (In this way, the Lord surrounded by the Gopīs appeared still more beautiful).

13. With their mental anguish completely dissipated by the extreme joy of seeing him, the Gopīs accomplished their desires to their heart's content, just as *Śrutis* (*Vedas* which pertain to the *karmakāṇḍa* or sacrificial and other rituals, are unsatisfied due to their inability to see the Lord but) have their purpose achieved (in the portion containing *jñāna-kāṇḍa* or spiritual knowledge leading to and resulting) in God-realization. With their upper garments coloured with the spots of saffron applied to their breasts, they prepared a seat for Kṛṣṇa, who was dearer to them than their self (or their indwelling soul).

14. The glorious Almighty Lord who is enthroned in the hearts of the masters of *yoga* took his seat on it. Assuming a personality which was the only receptacle of all the splendour and beauty in the three worlds[2], he shone splendidly in the congregation of Gopīs[3].

15. Offering warm respectful welcome to him who enkindled the passion of love, the Gopīs, with their eyebrows the sportfulness of which was enhanced by their smiles and playful oglings, and praising him while pressing his hands and feet placed on their laps, spoke to him slightly feigning anger.

*Gopīs said :*

16. Some show favour (in response) to those who resort to them, while others behave to the contrary (and favour those

1. VJ. reads : *Kṛṣṇehdyasta* etc. and interprets :
The sands whereof were scattered and made uneven by the sports of Kṛṣṇa—
(*Śrī Kṛṣṇa-mūrtikrīḍayā dyastāni ca taralāni cāta evācitāni itastato vikīrṇāni /*)

2. VJ. : Worthy of being enjoyed only by the goddess Lakṣmī who is adored and served by the three worlds.
VB : He assumed the best of the form suitable to the time, place etc. and manifested whatever was the worthiest.

3. SG. suggests that Kṛṣṇa assumed different forms each per Gopī and occupied the seat prepared by her and made her feel that it is her special privilege to receive Kṛṣṇa that way.

who do not resort to them), while (still) others do neither (and confer grace of favour on none). Oh Lord ! Be pleased to explain to us clearly about this.

*The Lord replied* :

17. Oh friends ! Those who love or resort to each other (the reciprocity of their love is with a selfish motive), strive to achieve purely their own purpose. Neither friendliness nor righteousness plays any part therein. This love is just for self-interest and nothing else[1].

18. Those who love even those who do not resort to them (or love them) in return, are really compassionate like parents. Here lies pure, blemishless righteousness as well as good will, Oh charming damsels (with beautiful waists).

19. There are some who do not love those who resort to them. How can they be expected to favour them who do not resort to them ? These belong to the following categories :

(1) They are sages immersed in the spiritual delight of *ātman* (the soul) (and are unconscious of the external world).

(2) They have accomplished the objects of their desires (and as such have no interest or longing for enjoyment and hence indifferent, though conscious of the external world).

(3) They are ungrateful (and incapable of appreciating obligations done to them).

(4) They are bent on hating their elderly people (father or teacher).

20. (When Kṛṣṇa dodged the implied accusation of Gopīs against him in explaining the above categories, the Gopīs smiled. Kṛṣṇa noticed it and explained).

As far as I am concerned, Oh friends (I do not belong to any of these categories because I am an extremely compassionate and the best friend of all), I do not respond immediately to their love and devotion (I do not reveal myself to them), so that they would ever continue to meditate upon me, just as a penniless man who has lost the money he

1. KD refuses to regard this as real worship or love : It is naked self-interest 32.17.172-80.

has earned, is absorbed in thinking about his lost treasure and would not be aware of anything else.

20.A *VJ's Text* adds :

In the same way both (the categories described above) continue to get from me the fruit or return in great or small measure (according to the intensity of their devotion to me) even as one obtains fruit from the *kalpa taru* (wishyielding tree).

21*. Oh fair damsels ! In this way, it is with a view of seeing the intensity and constancy of your devotion to me that I remained with you invisible (and stayed with you listening to your expression of love about me) as you have, for my sake, renounced the conventional worldly sense of decorum, the injunction of the Vedas (for righteousness or otherwise) and your kith and kin. Oh beloved ones ! It does not behove you to blame me, your Darling.

22. Even if the long life of celestials[1] be granted, it is not possible for me to repay adequately your devoted service to me with whom your relations are pure and faultless. And you have resorted to me and adored me cutting asunder the unbreakable ties that fetter you to your home. (The only way is:) May your righteousness be rewarded by your good deeds only.

*VJ : The Lord explains how to serve him on the plea of Praising the service rendered by Gopis :

Just as a penniless fellow who lost his wealth he could earn, is too much submerged in deep sorrow to be cognisant of anything else, you have dedicated to Me everything—worldly way of life, injunctions of the Vedas and your relatives; your devotional service shall not be fruitless. By nature I am beyond the ken of senses and hence was invisible to you—But it does not behove you to find fault with Me who am your darling.

1. The life of a god is 36000 human years but KD interprets *vibudhāyus* as the life-span of god Brahmā which is one *parārdha* years i.e. 100,000,000,000,000,000 years—32.22.260.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

### *Description of Rāsa Krīḍā*

*Śrī Śuka said :*

1. Listening to these soft fascinating words of the Lord, the Gopīs forgot the agony caused by separation from him and their bliss was enhanced by personal contact with him, Oh dear king.

2. There (on the sandy bank of the Yamunā) Lord Govinda inaugurated his *Rāsa Krīḍā*[1] (the play called *Rāsa*) with those jewel-like damsels (of superb beauty) who were so devoted and affectionate to him and who formed a circle with their arms interlocked (with those of Kṛṣṇa)[2]

3. Then commenced formally the festive dance called *rāsa*, beautified splendidly by the (moving) circle of Gopīs with Kṛṣṇa, the great Master of Yoga of inconceivable mystic powers (assumed as many forms as there were Gopīs and) entered in between every two Gopīs and with his arm placed around the neck of the adjacent Gopī, made each of the damsels consider to be nearest to him (and being embraced by him).

1. SG. quotes from Bharata's *Nāṭya- śāstra* : The dance in which a number of female dancers dance with their hands interlocked in the company of men who place their arms round the neck of the women-partners :

*naṭair gṛhīta-kaṇṭhīnām anyānyāttakara-śriyām/*
*nartakīnām bhaved rāso maṇḍalībhūya nartatām//*

2. SG. quotes *Bilva-maṅgala* which describes how Kṛṣṇa accompanied each Gopi as her dance-mate : "A circle of dancers was formed with Kṛṣṇa between two dancing ladies and a lady between two Kṛṣṇas. In the middle of such a circle of dancers Kṛṣṇa stood and played upon His flute.

*aṅganām aṅganām antarā Mādhavo /*
*Mādhavaṁ Mādhavaṁ cā'ntareṇāṅganā //*
*itthaṁ ākalpite maṇḍale madhyagaḥ /*
*saṁjagau veṇunā Devakī-nandanaḥ //*

This is possible only to *Bhagavān* Kṛṣṇa with His *yogamāyā*. Hence the significance of the words *bhagavān* and *yogamāyām upāśritaḥ* in *Supra* 10.29.1

Vide infra V. 20 which states that Kṛṣṇa assumed as many forms as there were the cowherd-women.

*Kṛtvā tāvantam ātmānaṁ yāvatīr gopa-yoṣitaḥ /*

4. (As soon as Lord Kṛṣṇa thought of beginning the *rāsakrīḍā*) there thronged in the sky hundreds of heavenly cars of celestials along with their wives whose minds were carried away with curiosity (of seeing the *rāsa* dance).

5. At that time, kettle-drums were sounded and showers of flowers fell. The heads of Gandharvas accompanied by their consorts sang the noble and hallowing glory of the Lord.

6. There arose in the ring of *rāsa* (dancers), the (orchestral) din of the jingling bangles and anklets and the tinkling of the small bells of girdles of the ladies accompanied by their darling Lord.

7. Exceedingly beautiful shone the glorious Lord, the son of Devakī, in the midst of those pairs of damsels like unto a highly precious emerald[1] embedded in between a pair of gold beads.

8. With their measured treads of feet and (artistic) movements of their hands (in dancing), with their smiles and (gracefully) amorous dance of eyebrows, with bending waists and shaking breasts, with the fluttering of their garments, with ear-rings rocking on their cheeks, with drops of perspiration trikling down their face and with their braids of hair and girdles getting loosened (in the course of dancing), the dancing-mates of Kṛṣṇa glorified the Lord in songs and appeared beautiful like flashes of lightening illuminating a circle of clouds (as Kṛṣṇa assumed as many forms as the Gopīs in that circular movement of *rāsa*).

9*. In the course of dancing, the Gopīs, enamoured of loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa and thrilled with delight at the touch of Kṛṣṇa, sang at the pitch of their voices sweetened with different musical modes (*rāgas*) filling thus the whole universe with the music (of their song).

10. A certain Gopī sang in chorus with Kṛṣṇa in a higher pitch. Even though her notes of the gamut (*svara-jāti*) did not harmonize with that of Kṛṣṇa, she was applauded by him

1. SG. explains that although Kṛṣṇa was of sapphire-blue complexion, the brilliant-golden complexion of the Gopīs, He embraced, made Him appear like emerald.

*Commentators quote names of Gopīs. These names of the Gopīs involved in the dance are imaginary-unsupported by the text of the Bh.P.

with the words "Well-done", as he was pleased with her performance. When she proceeded to reach her highest pitch to the measured beat (*tāla*) well-known as *Dhruva* (*pada*), Kṛṣṇa showed great regard for her.

11. Thoroughly exhausted by (participation in) the *rāsa* dance and with her bangles slipping (from her wrists) and jasmine flowers dropping (from her braid), another Gopī caught hold by her arm, the shoulder of Kṛṣṇa who was standing by (i.e. flung her arms round him).

12. (It is reported that) another Gopī smelt how Kṛṣṇa's arm placed on her shoulder, was fragrant like a lily and was anointed with sandal paste, (and losing herself) she (actually) kissed it and was thrilled with it (with her hair standing on their ends).

13. To another Gopī who rested on Kṛṣṇa's cheek her own which was glowing with the brilliance of her own earrings rocking in the course of dancing Kṛṣṇa gave his half-chewed betel.

14. Another Gopi, standing by his side was fatigued with singing and dancing, making all the while a jingling sound of her anklets and girdle (while dancing) pressed to her bosom his blissful lotus-hand.

15. Obtaining Acyuta (the immortal God—Kṛṣṇa), the sole Darling of the goddess Śrī (Lakṣmī) as their beloved, the cowherd women with his arms round their neck extolled him in song and played (danced) with him.

16. The Gopa women with the beauty of their face enhanced by lotuses adorning their ears, cheeks beautified with their curly locks of hair, and drops of perspiration, with wreaths of flowers dropping from their (braids of) hair, danced with the glorious Lord accompanied with the musical instruments in the form of jingling bangles and anklets, at the ring of the *rāsa* dance where humming blackbees acted as songsters.

17*. Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of goddess Lakṣmī, sported with the beauties of Vraja by embracing them, pressing their palms, winsome oglings with free amorous gestures and hearty (loud)

* VJ. God is absolutely independent and above all prescriptions and prohibitions and can violate all canons of conduct !

laughter, even as a child would play with its own reflection (in the mirror).

18. Their senses were so overwhelmed with ecstatic joy at the contact with that Divine Personality that the women of Vraja whose wreaths and ornaments were loosened and falling, were too much beside themselves (with joy) to re-adjust their dishevelled locks of hair, their garments and brassiers, Oh Prominent Kuru!

19. While witnessing Kṛṣṇa's love sports, the celestial damsels were smitten with love and fainted. And even the Moon-god along with his retinue (of stars or *nakṣatras*) was too much amazed (to proceed with his movements and halted).

20. Though a reveller in his own Supreme bliss, the Lord assumed as many forms as there were Gopīs and delightfully disported[1] with each of them.

21. The merciful Lord wiped out affectionately, the sweat off their faces with his most blissful comforting hand as they were fatigued with overdancing with him, Oh dear king.

22. Adoring the Supreme Lord with the splendour of their cheeks enhanced by the brilliant gold ear-rings and curly locks of hair and with glances accompanied with nectar-like smiles, the Gopīs who (despite their fatigue in the *rāsa* dance) became enraptured by the touch of his finger-nails, burst out in singing his hallowing deeds.[2]

23. Like unto a king-elephant breaking down the dams and entering water in the company of she-elephants, the exhausted[3] Lord Kṛṣṇa who had transgressed the restraints (laid down by the Vedas and public decorum) became desirous of getting over the fatigue, and in the company of the Gopīs, entered the waters of the Yamunā (where he was) closely

1. VJ. reads 'rarāma'. The *Parasmaipada* form indicates the aloofness of the Lord in that *rāsa*

*rarāmeti Vyatyayena para-dārābhimarśaṇena doṣo nāsti iti vakṣyamāṇam artham ihaiva sūcayati*

2. These songs suggested the conclusion of the *rāsa* (Ve.)

3. SG. imagines that this adj. is used to indicate that the beauty of Kṛṣṇa's countenance was enhanced by droplets of swea appearing on it through fatigue.

followed by black-bees (humming melodiously) like the chiefs of celestial songsters, the Gandharvas, (as they were) allured by his garland (of *Kunda* flowers) squeezed by contact with the persons of the Gopīs (while embracing etc.) and was coloured with saffron applied by them to their breasts.

24. Oh dear Parīkṣit ! The Lord, who ever revels in his own blissful state, sported here like a king-elephant as he was profusely sprinkled over with water on all sides by the youthful damsels who were casting amorous glances at him, and were heartily laughing, while he was being praised by gods who were showering on him flowers from their aerial cars.

25. Like unto a young elephant exuding temporal fluid sauntering in the company of female elephants, the Lord, surrounded by a swarm of black-bees and a bevy of young ladies, roved in a grove on the bank of the Yamunā, where blew on all sides a gentle breeze bearing the fragrance of acquatic flowers as well as of the flowers on lands.

26. In this way, the Lord of accomplished desires to whom the bevy of young damsels were deeply attached and devoted, enjoyed all those nights (without losing a single minute without enjoyment—the night[1] illuminated by the rays of the moon and which formed the basis for all charming poetical works specially appropriate for autumnal season—but he controlled all his energy within himself (such was his control over Eros.)

*King Parīkṣit said* :

27. The Almighty Lord of the Universe along with his aṁśa-part (Balarāma) incarnated here to establish Dharma (righteous way of life) and the suppression of the vile way of life.

28. He is the Promulgator of the moral order. He is the ideal model of ethical standard and the Protector thereof. How did he act in direct contravention of it, in seducing sensually the wives of others ?

1. The plural number indicates that throughout His *Kiśora* period (from 11 to 15 years of age), Kṛṣṇa enjoyed the *rāsa*-dance every night-SG. This is a better interpretation than imagining that Kṛṣṇa extended that particular night for many days while Gopīs felt it to be a single night.

29. Oh holy sage of sacred vows ! Be pleased to resolve our doubt as to with what intention the Lord of Yadus who is said to have accomplished all his desires, perpetrated such censurable deed.

*Śrī Śuka explained* :

30. Transgression of the canons of righteousness and over-adventurism are found to have been committed by mighty rulers. But that does not amount to a blemish for a noble heroic soul, as in the case of omnivorous fire (which does not get polluted by consuming impure things).

31. An incapable weakling (dependent on his body) should never commit this (transgression) even mentally. A person imitating him foolishly meets destruction like a person other than Rudra (but imitating Rudra) does by swallowing the (*Halāhala*) poison churned out of the sea.

32. The words of the possessors of divine wisdom and might are always correct and authoritative, but not necessarily, so their acts (which may be emulated on certain occasions only). Hence an intelligent person should practice such course (of conduct) which is consistent with their own precepts.[1]

33. Such authoritative persons who are devoid of ego (*ahaṁkāra*) have no selfish ends to serve by virtuous behaviour or have no stakes to lose by acting to the contrary.

34. Need it be told that the Lord, the controller of all beings like the sub-human creation (birds, beasts etc.), human beings and celestials who, being fit to be governed by him (and are subject to his control), is not concerned with piety or impiety of the acts (the moral code of conduct of ordinary beings is not applicable to the Almighty).

35. The sages who are completely satisfied (and have become desireless) by serving the pollen-like dust of his

1. VR. : Therefore, an intelligent person should follow those acts of God which are consistent with His precepts. *OR* A prudent man should not emulate the acts of God which are against His precepts.

VJ. : An intelligent person should not practice what is said or regarded as contrary to Vedic injuctions.

lotus-feet and who have absolutely freed themselves by shaking off all the bondage of *karmas* by virtue of their Yogic Powers, behave according to their free will and are not bound (by their acts). How could there be any bondage to the glorious Lord who has assumed a personality at his own free will ?

36. He who dwells not only in these Gopīs but also in their husbands—nay in all embodied beings (as their Inner Controller), and who presides over all these, has as a sport, assumed the form of Kṛṣṇa in this world.

37. It is for showering Grace on all creatures that the Lord has put on a human form and participated in those sportful activities (like the *rāsa krīḍā*). By listening to these, a person may become attached to him exclusively (as a devotee).

38. The male inhabitants of Vraja were so much spell-bound by the deluding potency of the Lord that they always considered their wives ever present by their sides and they never felt any jealousy against Kṛṣṇa.

39. At the approach of the *Brāhma muhūrta* (i. e. dawn) the Gopīs, the beloveds of the glorious Lord, returned reluctantly to their homes with the permission[1] of the Lord.

40. He who reverentially listens to and rehearses the account of the amorous sport of Viṣṇu (i. e. his incarnation Kṛṣṇa) with the damsels of Vraja, conceives intense devotion to the Almightly Lord, attains spiritual wisdom and self-control, and soon overcomes the maladies of the heart (like lust and other passions).

1. SG.—*anu-moditāḥ*—who were all the while—(every minute of that night)—filled with joy by Kṛṣṇa (hence their reluctance to return).

## CHAPTER THIRTYFOUR

*Sudarśana emancipated and slaying of Śaṅkhacūḍa*

*Śrī Śuka said :*

1. On one occasion, the cowherds had their curiosity aroused in participating in a pilgrimage to god (Śiva) and they set out in carts drawn by bullocks to a place known as Ambikāvana (the grove of goddess Pārvatī).

2. Having performed ablutions in the river Sarasvatī, they devoutly worshipped the god Śiva as well as the goddess Pārvatī with various articles of worship.

3. Most reverentially, they donated cows, gold, garments, honey, sweet-meats to Brāhmaṇas as gifts, praying "May god Śiva be propitious unto us."

4. The highly fortunate Nanda, Sunandaka and others observed a vow of subsisting on the waters of the river (the whole day) and passed that night on the bank of the Sarasvatī.

5. A certain big boa-constricter of that forest, being pinched with extreme hunger, came there by chance and began to swallow up Nanda who was asleep.

6. While being swallowed by the serpent, Nanda screamed out "Oh Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, this big serpent is devouring me, Oh child! please save me who have approached you for rescue."

7. Hearing his shriek, cowherds suddenly awoke. Beholding Nanda swallowed by the serpent, they got bewildered and struck the serpent with fire-brands.

8. Though it was scorched by burning fuel, the serpent did not let go Nanda. At that time Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Sātvatas, approached the reptile and touched it with his foot.

9. With all his sins absolved by the touch of the glorious Lord of Lakṣmī, he cast off his serpentine body and assumed a form that was worshipped by Vidyādharas.

10. The Lord (of senses), Kṛṣṇa, asked the man with resplendent personality decorated with a wreath of gold, as he reverentially bowed down to him.

11. "Who are you of miraculous form resplendent with supreme splendour ? How is it that you lost your self-control and were forced into this disgustful form of life ?"

*The serpent (now a Vidyādhara) answered :*

12. "I am a certain (famous) Vidyādhara known as Sudarśana. Endowed with divine splendour and excellent beauty, I ranged in my aerial car in all directions.

13. Puffed with pride of my beautiful form, I jeered at the ugly forms of the sages Aṅgiras. For my sin of deriding them, I was brought down to this species by them.

14. I now find that this curse was pronounced upon me to show me grace, by those merciful sages, inasmuch as I am absolved of all sins by being touched with foot by the preceptor of the world.

15. Oh destroyer of sins ! I am relieved of the curse by the touch of Your foot. You are the dispeller of the fears of beings who resort to you through fear of *saṁsāra*. Kindly give me permission to take leave of You.

16. Oh great *yogin* ! Oh supreme Person ! I approach you most humbly, Oh Protector of the righteous people ! Oh resplendent God ! Oh Supreme Ruler of the rulers of worlds ! Be pleased to grant me permission (to return to my region). Oh Acyuta ! Instantaneously at your very sight, I am released from the curse of the Brāhmaṇa.

17. A person who utters your name at once purifies all the listeners (of the Name) as well as himself. What more need be said that a person who is touched by your foot gets absolved of all his sins instantaneously."

18. Taking leave of Kṛṣṇa (the descendant of Daśārha) with these words, circumabulating him and playing obeisance to him, Sudarśana went to heaven and Nanda was thus rescued from that precarious situation.

19. Having seen the special personal glory of Kṛṣṇa, the inhabitants of Vraja with astonished minds, completed their religious observance of Śivarātri. They returned to Vraja reverentially discussing his glorious exploits.

20. On another occasion, Govinda (Kṛṣṇa) and Balarāma of wonderful prowess, sauntered in the forest at night in the company of damsels of Vraja.

21. Being melodiously extolled by damsels, who were deeply attached to them, with their persons well adorned and

beautifully painted with sandal-paste and pigments, they wore beautiful wreaths and were dressed in fine garments.

22. They hailed the advent of the night, as the moon and the stars were rising and appeared in view and as a gentle breeze was blowing over the bed of lilies to which were attracted swarms of bees intoxicated with the fragrance of jasmine flowers.

23. Going simultaneously through the whole scale of musical notes with modulations of their voices, both of them presented vocal music which was auspicious and delightful to the mind and ears of all beings in the world.

24. Hearing that ravishing music, the cowherd women fell in a trance and were not aware of their garments slipping away from their persons, loosening of their braids and dropping of wreaths from them, Oh Protector of the people !

25. While they both were thus sporting as they pleased and singing at will like intoxicated persons, a servant of Kubera known as Śaṅkha-cūḍa approached them.

26. Before their very eyes (and in defiance of them), he dauntlessly drove the screaming young women who were under their protection, towards the north, Oh king !

27. Beholding their women crying out (for their succour), "Oh Kṛṣṇa ! Oh Balarāma" like cows when seized by a robber, the two brothers rushed in pursuit.

28. Shouting out the promise of protection, "Don't be afraid" the two brothers armed themselves with a Śāla tree and rushing hastily, they overtook the wretch of a *Guhyaka* (Yakṣa)

29. Terrified to see them both close on his heels like the time-spirit and god of death *incarnate*, the foolish fellow let the women go and took to his heels with the intention of saving his own life.

30. In order to deprive the Yakṣa of the jewel on his head, Kṛṣṇa pursued him wherever he ran, while Balarāma stayed on protecting the women.

31. Within a short distance, the Lord confronted him and with a blow of his fist sundered off his head along with the jewel.

32. Killing Śaṅkhacūḍa in this way and taking from him the brilliant gem, Kṛṣṇa gave it, out of affection, to his elder brother, before the very eyes of the damsels.

## CHAPTER THIRTYFIVE

*Gopīs' Song (in pairs of verses)*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. When Kṛṣṇa departed to the forest (to tend the cattle), Gopīs whose hearts followed him, spent their days in great misery, loudly singing of his sportful pastimes.

*The Gopīs said*:

2-3. Oh Gopīs when Mukunda with his left cheek inclined to the joint of his left arm and with dancing eyebrows, applies the flute to his lower lip and begins to play on it with his tender fingers placed on its holes, the Sidddha damsels passing through their aerial cars along with their husbands, feel disconcerted with amazement at the melodious music, and feeling bashful to find that their hearts have been hit by the shafts of love, become infatuated and are not aware of the loosening of their garments.

4-5. Oh delicate ladies ! How wonderful is the phenomenon ! Listen. When this child of Nanda, with his smiles beaming like a wreath of sparkling pearls[1] and with the lightening-like (fickle yet lustrous) goddess of wealth (Lakṣmī) permanently abiding on his chest (as *Śrī-Vatsa*, plays melodiously) on his flute to bring solace and delight to the afflicted people, bulls in Vraja, deer and kine in their herds, from far afar, have their hearts captivated with the enchanting music of the flute and stand (listening to the music) with their

1. OR (1) smiles reflecting from the garland of pearls on His chest as His countenance is inclined towards it. (2) Whose laugh shines like a wreath of pearls on His chest (3) The lustre of which was spotlessly white like the laugh of pearls (*hārāṇāṁ hāsa iva viśadā sphūrtir yasya*)—ŚR.
VJ. reads.—*hāra-bhāsaḥ*—Looks brilliant with the pearl-garland.

ears erect and (holding unswallowed) half-chewed morsels of grass between their teeth (and look) as if they are asleep or drawn in picture.

6-7. (The melodious music of Kṛṣṇa's flute hypnotises even the non-sentient creation.)

When Lord Kṛṣṇa dresses himself like a wrestler with a tuft of peacock-feathers and tender leaves and anointed with mineral paints, and sometimes accompanied by Balarāma and cowherds calls the cows (through the melodious notes of his flute), (even the non-sentient) rivers stop flowing as if they are strongly longing to receive the dust of his louts-feet borne by the breeze. But they possess poor merits like us, inasmuch as, they (instead of getting the much-yarned-for dust) keep waving their arms in the form of waves and have the flow of water stopped (as we have our eyes bedimmed with tears).

8-9. When Kṛṣṇa,[1] who like the Ancient-most Person Nārāyaṇa, possesses unfading eternal splendour[2], (and whose heroic exploits were celebrated by his followers, (the cowherds[3]), ranges[4] in the forest, calls the cows which are grazing on the slopes of the mount Govardhana by uttering their names (musically) through his flute, the creepers and trees in the forest[5] as if mainfest the All-pervading Lord Viṣṇu abiding in them, by exhibiting their floral richness and wealth of fruit, laden wherewith the boughs of the trees are bowing down low and with their bodies thrilled with intense love spray forth a shower of honey.

1. This describes the effect of Kṛṣṇa's flute on the immovable or stationary creation like trees—ŚR., VR.

VJ. : Just as the most Ancient *puruṣa* Nārāyaṇa who lies on the cosmic waters, is being praised by sages like Sanaka with the Vedic *mantras* which are profusely evolved out of the mouth of Vāyu etc.

2. Or : the ever-lasting abode of Lakṣmī, the goddess of affluence, splendour and beauty.

3. Or : Gods and sages (in the case of viṣṇu)

4. VJ : The adj. *vanacara* includes all the incarnations including the Fish.

5. VJ. : applies this to the sages and *Yogis* in the forest who perform austere penance in the forest; who realizing Lord Viṣṇu within their hearts, bow to Him with their hands and are imbued with eternal bliss.

10-11.* Lo ! Look here when Kṛṣṇa with a charming *Tilaka* (a sacred mark on his forehead) heartily appreciates the enchanting high pitched humming-song of the swarms of black-bees intoxicated with the honey in the Tulasī flowers woven in his *Vanamālā* and emitting ethereal fragrance, and applies the flute to his lips (to breathe a song in response to their music), the cranes, swans and other acquatic birds living in the lake, with their hearts enticed away by the captivating music, approach Lord Hari and with their eyes closed and minds under perfect control, meditate on him (lit. sit close to him) in perfect silence.

12-13. When accompanied by Balarāma and beautifully decorated with floral ear-rings[1], Kṛṣṇa stands on the summits of mountains and that Lord of eternal Bliss fills the whole Universe by the fascinating music of his flute, Oh beautiful ladies of Vraja, even the cloud, being afraid in mind of showing disrespect to the great Lord, rumbles softly keeping time with the tune of his flute, spreads himself over him as an umbrella and covers the friend (of the universe) with a flower-like spray (or the invisible gods spray him with flowers).

14-15. (To Yaśodā who has joined these Gopis :)

Oh chaste lady ! Your son is expert in the various games and sports played by cowherds. But when he applies his flute to his Bimba-fruit-like red lips and plays out varied original tunes in the art of flute-playing, the chiefs of gods of whom Indra, god Śiva and god Brahmā are prominent, listen to the delineation of the music in different pitch again and again.[2] Although these gods were experts in music, they failed to grasp the heart (the underlying principles or the nature of the fine points) of the music and stood confused.

16-17. When Kṛṣṇa of the noble gait of the king-elephants moves on playing on his flute, and soothing the pains caused to the earth at Vraja due to the *hoofs* of the cattle, by means of his feet similar to lotus-petals and beautified with the marks of a flag, a vajra (thunder-bolt), a lotus and a goad, we, with the stormy passion of love enkinded in

* This describes the effect of the music of Hari's flute on birds.

1. or with pearl necklaces.

2. or inclining their neck and mind to the direction whence the musical notes were coming—VR.

us by his sportful oglings, are reduced to the (stationary) state of trees and out of infatuation are not aware of the loosening of the braids of hair and the garment.

18-19. Sometimes, when wearing a wreath of beads[1] and counting the cows (in his charge thereby (with the beads), Kṛṣṇa, wearing a garland of Tulasī the fragrance of which is specially liked by him, sings playing on his flute, resting his hand on the shoulder of his affectionate friend, the she-deer, the mates of black-antelopes, with their hearts enticed away by the music of the flute, follow Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of excellences, and renouncing all desires to return home, stay by his side like the cowherd-damsels.

20-21. Oh sinless Yaśodā ! When your child, Nanda's son, picturesquely dressed with the wreaths of *Kunda* (jasmine) flowers and surrounded by the cowherds and the wealth of the cattle, plays on the bank of the Yamunā, joking with his intimate friends, a gentle breeze (from the south) blows agreeably and pleasantly and offers him respect with its cool touch charged with the fragrance of sandal. And bands of demigods (like Gandharvas) performing the function of bards and minstrels, wait around him worshipping him with instrumental and vocal music and articles of worship.

22-23. Being compassionate to the people of Vraja and the cows, he held up the mount Govardhana. When after collecting his entire wealth of cattle, he returns home playing on his flute, his panygeric is being sung by his friends and his feet being worshipped by the old (gods like Brahmā and others) on the way, with his garlands covered over with the dust raised by the hoofs of the cows, here comes the Moon (the Lord of stars) born of Devakī's womb—a veritable feast to the eyes of Gopīs by his splendour, even in a fatigued condition,—he does so solely with the desire of fulfilling the wishes of his friends.

24-25. With his eyes slightly rolling with ecstatic joy, showing great regard to his friends and well-wishers, adorned

1. Adorned with jewel *Kaustubha—VJ.*

with a wreath of sylvain flowers, with his face pale like a slightly ripening *badara* fruit, and his tender cheeks beautified with the splendour of his gold ear-rings, here comes in the evening, like the Moon (the Lord of the night). The Lord of Yadus (Kṛṣṇa) with the sportive gait of an elephant-king, with a cheerful face relieving the day-long endless agony (of separation) of the cow-like Gopīs of Vraja (to relieve the cows of the daylong—as if interminable—heat of the sun).

*Śrī Śuka said* :

26. In this way, the highly fortunate damsels of Vraja with their minds and hearts absorbed in him, used to spend their days in delight singing the sportful activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Oh King Parīkṣit.

## CHAPTER THIRTYSIX

*Akrūra deputed to bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to Mathurā*

*Śrī Śuka narrated* :

1. Some time after this (festive occasion described in the last chapter), there arrived at Vraja, Ariṣṭa, a demon having the form of a bull, with a huge body and a big hump, tearing up and shaking the earth with his hoofs.

2. Bellowing with terrific harshness and breaking the earth with his hoofs, he rushed with his tail upraised, turning up mounds of earth with the ends of his horns.

3-4. Discharging dung and urine in small quantities at intervals, he came with his eyes fixed and staring. Oh dear Parīkṣit ! At his violent and terrific roar, cows and women were so shaken with fear that they prematurely delivered their off-spring in miscarriage.

5. Noticing that demonic beast with sharp horns, cowherd men and women got terrified. And the cattle ran away in fear, deserting Gokula, Oh king.

6-7. Calling upon Kṛṣṇa, "Oh Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa", all of them sought the shelter of Govinda for their protection. Noticing the Gokula overwhelmed with fear and fleeing, Kṛṣṇa reassured them with the words, "Don't be afraid", and challenged that demon in the form of a bull, "You stupid wretched-most fellow ! What do you gain by terrifying the poor cowherds and cattle ?

8. When I am here to crush down the pride of strength of the wicked and evil-minded brutes like you." Challenging him thus, Kṛṣṇa stroked his arms and provoked the wrath of Ariṣṭa, by clapping his hands.

9. Kṛṣṇa waited spreading out his serpent-like mighty arm on the shoulder of a friend. The demon Ariṣṭa who was thus enraged, dashed at Kṛṣṇa in fury, furrowing the earth below with his hoofs and dispersing the clouds with his tail upraised.

10. Thrusting forward the ends of his horns and staring fixed with blood-shot eyes, the demon, trying to cow down Kṛṣṇa with his side-glances, darted at him even as the thunderbolt discharged by Indra.

11. Catching hold of the Asura by his horns, the glorious Lord pushed him back to a distance of eighteen paces as an elephant would do to drive back its rival.

12. Although pushed backward by the Lord, Ariṣṭa who was perspiring all over, and heaving sighs, sprang to his feet and in a wrathful frenzy, speedily dashed at Kṛṣṇa again.

13. As he rushed towards Kṛṣṇa, the Lord seized the demon by the horns and hurled him on the ground. Pressing him down with one foot, he wrung his body as one would wring and twist a drenched cloth. Pulling out one of his horns, he struck him and the demon dropped down on the earth.

14. Vomiting blood, discharging urine and dung, kicking up his legs and with eyes rolling under excruciating pains, he went to the abode of death. Thereupon, the celestials, showering flowers on him, sang hymns in praise of Hari.

15. Having slain the demonic bull and glorified by his

people (Gopas and gods), He, along with Balarāma, entered Gokula giving delight to the eyes of Gopīs.

16. When the Asura (demon) Ariṣṭa was killed by Kṛṣṇa of miraculous feats, the worshipful divine sage Nārada who was endowed with divine vision, intimated to Kaṁsa as follows :

17. "By Vasudeva who was apprehensive (about the safety of his children) were given in charge of his friend Nanda, Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī and Balarāma, the son of Rohiṇī, while the daughter (you tried to kill) was born of Yaśodā. It is by them both that your men (deputed to kill Kṛṣṇa) were slain."

18. Hearing that (revelation) Kaṁsa, the king of Bhojas whose mind was agitated with wrath caught hold of a sharp, sword, with a view to kill Vasudeva.

19. He was prevented from taking that action (lest knowing of their father's death Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma should abscond). But realizing that his (Vasudeva's) sons are (ordained by Providence as) the cause of his death, Kaṁsa got Vasudeva and his consort fettered with iron chains.

20. When the divine sage (Nārada) departed, Kaṁsa sent for Keśin and commissioned him with the order, "Let Balarāma and Keśava (Kṛṣṇa) be killed by you."

21. Then Kaṁsa, the king of Bhojas, summoned his ministers like Muṣṭika, Cāṇūra, Śala, Tośala and others, conductors of elephants and spoke to them :

22-23. Listen to this, Oh warriors, Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika. In the Vraja of Nanda dwell Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, the two sons of Vasudeva. It is ordained that I should meet death at their hands. When both of them are brought here, they are to be done to death by you in the game of wrestling.

24. Let galleries of various designs, suitable to the arenas of wrestlers, be constructed. Let all people in the city (of Mathurā) and the villages, witness this freestyle wrestling.

*Additional verses in the Text of VR and VJ.*

24.1. Oh highly intelligent superintendent (or keeper) of my elephants ! Listen to this command of mine. Our Elephant, Kuvalayāpīḍa has the rut flowing from its temples.

24.2. It should be placed at the entrance of the arena with a heavy iron bar in its trunk. The two sons of Vasudeva (Ānaka-dundubhi) are to be killed.

24.3. But even the conductor of the elephant got agitated in mind and submitted, "How can I kill the two sons of the sister of His Majesty, the Lord of the earth ?"

24.4. When addressed thus by the elephant-driver, the wicked-minded Kaṁsa ordered him again, making all the assembled persons hear it for compliance.

*Kaṁsa said* :

24.5. Carefully listen to this command personally given by me. You should all hear it and bear it in mind. Listen to the reason why from the start, I have been a sworn enemy of these, even though they are my relatives.

24.6. On one occasion, my highly fortunate lotus-eyed mother who was in her youth, was wandering about in the garden of the palace, when a gentle cool breeze was blowing.

24.7-8. It was the spring time when the garden was beautified with full-blown Aśoka, Bakul, areca nuts and Punnāga trees, with humming and hovering swarms of black bees, resounded with the sweet cooings of cuckoos. It was attractive with the group of dancing peacocks and the herds of playful monkeys; it was lined with rows of Sāla trees.

24.9. While my mother of auspicious vows was sauntering there, she, who was well adorned and had taken her bath after menstruation, and was agitated with the passion of love, contemplated of her husband.

24.10-11. At that time a certain Gandharva, Drumila by name, was going through the garden, unseen by others. He noticed that she was alone and ready for the occasion. He being able to read the thoughts and intentions in the minds of all, understood what she was thinking about. He assumed the form of Ugrasena and resembled him in speech and smiles.

24.12. The Gandharva who entertained a lustful passion about that chaste lady and was love-striken, got her consent. Being perfectly ignorant about the reality, she accompanied and had a pleasant time with him in that forest grove.

24.13. That chaste lady somehow came to discover him to be somebody else during the act of intercourse. She was extremely distressed at heart and with her mind and eyes agitated demanded, "Who are you, Oh wretched cheat ? That a wicked person like you has perpetrated this deed condemned by the noble ?"

24.14. The long-armed Drumila tried to console her who demanded this of him. He gently explained, "Oh good lady ! We belong to a family of Gandharvas. We are equal to the celestials and are there beloved attendants.

24.15. Oh auspicious lady ! Please note that we (Gandharvas) are not easily accessible to females of the human species like you who are fit to be enjoyed by human beings only. And there is a lot of difference between men who are subject to birth, death and such other physical and mental ailments and the celestials (who are unaffected by them), Oh pretty woman !"

24.16. While he was talking thus, the lady with her mind overwhelmed with rage, interrupted, "Do you want to appease me now after perpetrating that nefarious act ?

24.17. In defiance of the deities presiding over water, fire, earth, air, the ether, the moon, the sun, and disregarding the presiding divinities of the cardinal points, Time-Spirit, the two twilights (the dawn and the dusk) and the Dharma itself, you have adulterated with me.

24.18. Like unto a restraint-less elephant emitting ichor and blind with passion, you, wretched fellow, have made me, who was like a pure, translucent lotus-pond in a forest, turbid and impure. You wrethed-most vile immortal ! Do you again dare to try to conciliate me ?"

24.19-20. While she was censuring him thus, he, being afraid of being imprecated, urged through fear, "Oh Lotus-eyed lady ! Sexual relation between immortals and women is of the regular order while that between men and celestial women is of the irregular order and is unnatural.

24.21. Hence, Oh lady with lotus fragrance, please note that I have not committed an offence. My semen shall not go waste. A son will be born to you.

24. 22-23-24. He will be affluent, intelligent, highly energetic and daring. My words shall not prove vain and untrue." While he was speaking thus, my enraged mother who was deeply distressed at the loss of her irrecoverable chastity, exploded in wrath : "You have transgressed the bounds of *dharma* and have taken to different (sinful) course of conduct, and are a wicked sinner, a follower of the wrong (immoral) path, your son shall be cruel, characterised by criminality and void of good qualities. He will never receive the blessings of gods, Brāhmaṇas and sages".

24.25. While the lady was giving vent to her wrathful expression, the Gandharva became afraid that she would curse him and uttering the words. "He will be an enemy of your relatives", he disappeared.

24.26. After his departure, my blessed mother came back to her palace from the garden. And nobody else knew the incident.

24.27. In due course she became pregnant and delivered me at the proper time. On one occasion, the worshipful sage Nārada told me all this.

24.28. Since that time I hate these relatives who are wicked. You yourself are a witness here how they are always inimical to me.

24.29-30. As I am born of a Gandharva, it will not be sinful to kill the wickedly disposed Ugrasena, the evilminded Devaka, the crafty Vasudeva and their partisans and dependants. I, therefore, issue a command to you that they both (Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma) should be ruthlessly killed.

24.31. By performing the worship of god Yama, the deity of the other world with the offerings of the two boys (Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma) crushed to death by the mighty elephant, let them (Vasudeva, Ugrasena and others) follow their path (to the abode of death).

24.32-33.* Let Vasudeva, Ugrasena, that Nanda and Devaka, the cowherds and Yādavas and all of their followers and partisans witness with tearful eyes the killing of their own

* Vṛndāvana edition gives these 33 additional verses.

sons. Let all the people in the country be invited and let them witness the free style wrestling[1] (*svaira-saṁ-yugam.*

25. Oh conductor of my elephant! You are a good man: The elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa is to be posted by you at the entrance of the arena. See to it that my two enemies (Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma) are killed by it.

26. Let the sacrifice connected with the bow (*dhanur-yāga*)[2] be commenced with due formality on the fourteenth day (of the dark half[3]). Let the priests offer sacrificial animals as victims to the king of *bhūtas* (goblins) i.e. god Śiva who is the *bestower* of all boons (to god Śiva the bestower of boons and the ruler over all beings).

27. Having thus passed the orders, Kaṁsa who was adept in the technique of achieving his purpose sent for Akrūra, the prominent member of the Yadu clan. Taking his palm in his hand, he spoke to Akrūra.

28. "Oh leader of charitable persons![4] Devoted as you are to me, please do a friendly turn to me; for there is nobody else either in my clan of Bhojas or those of Yadus who will guard my interest.

29. Hence, Oh gentle friend, I depend on you as a means of accomplishing an important mission even as the mighty Indra does, depending on god Viṣṇu, achieve his object.

30. Go to the Vraja of Nanda. There dwell two sons of Vasudeva. Please fetch them both here in this chariot. Let there be no delay.

31. It is reported that gods who are dependents of Viṣṇu have ordained my death (at the hands of one of them). Bring both of them along with cowherds headed by Nanda (lest the boys should refuse to come). Instruct Nanda and others to bring

1. but *pauruṣam*— 'my prowess' interprets VR.

2. VB. explains : As against the Viṣṇu-power of Kṛṣṇa, Kaṁsa wanted to counter-balance it by propitiating god Śiva. The worship of god Śiva as presiding over the bow (which would thereby be victorious in fighting) is called *dhanuryāga* in *Śiva-tantra.*

3. VB states it to be the *Śivarātri* day.

4. VB. : Akrūra used to give cows as gifts to Brāhmaṇas every day for a period of twelve years and his mother gave food in charity. Hence he is designated as *dānapati* (the leader of donors).

the tribute (curds, ghee etc.) so that they would be convinced that the *dhanur-makha* (sacrifice to Bow) is real and not a ruse to bring them.

32. When they are brought here, I shall get them killed by an elephant which is like the god of death. If they happen to escape (death from the elephant), I shall get them despatched by two wrestlers who are like thunderbolts.

33-34. When both of them are finished, I shall put to death Vasudeva and his brothers who will be grieving (the death of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma) and massacre the clans of Vṛṣṇis Bhojas, Dāśārhas, and also my aged father Ugrasena who still dotes for sovereignty and his brother Devaka as well as all other enemies of mine.

35. It is after that that this earth will be rid of all thorns (free from enemies). My father-in-law Jarā-sandha will be like a father unto me and Dvivida (the monkey chief), a dear friend.

36. Śambara, Naraka and Bāṇa have entered into friendly alliance with me. Having killed all the kings siding with gods, I shall enjoy the earth.

37. In view of (the knowledge of) these facts, quickly bring the youngsters Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa inducing them to witness the bow-sacrifice as well as the beauty of Mathurā, the capital of Yadus.

*Akrūra replied* :

38. Oh king ! What you intend to do is all for the good inasmuch as you try to avert the evil (viz. death). But one should maintain equanimity and try one's level best whether it results in success or failure. For it is the Providence which is the real cause (instrument) of success.

39. A man builds castles in the air (lit. one entertains very big plans) even though they are thwarted by the Destiny and thus experiences joy and sorrow. I shall, however, carry out your order.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

40. Having directed Akrūra (to go to Vraja) and sent away his counsellors, Kaṁsa entered his palace and Akrūra his home.

## CHAPTER THIRTYSEVEN

*Slaying of Asuras Keśin and Vyoma*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. Demon Keśin who was deputed by Kaṁsa, assumed the form of a gigantic horse with the speed of the mind. Furrowing the earth with his hoofs, overcrowding the sky with clouds and heavenly cars dispersed by the waving of his mane and terrifying all creatures by his neighing he came to Nanda's Vraja.

1-A*. With big eyes, a terribly vast cavern-like mouth, an enormous neck resembling a large dark-blue cloud, the wicked-hearted Keśin, desirous of achieving the desired object of Kaṁsa, rushed to the Vraja of Nanda, making it tremble with fear.

2. Occupying a forward position, the glorious Lord challenged Keśin who was creating a panic among the inhabitants of his Gokula by his neighing and was disturbing the formation of clouds in the sky by his tail and was seeking a fight with him—at which Keśin roared like a lion.

3. Beholding Kṛṣṇa confronting him, that unapproachable formidable beast of terrific speed rushed at him with extreme rage, drinking up the heavens, as it were, with his wide open mouth (and turning round) kicked hard with his hind legs the Lord with lotus-eyes.

4. Dodging the Kick, Kṛṣṇa, the Lord (who is supra-sense perception) angrily caught hold of his two hind legs with his hands and whirling him round threw him contemptuously to a distance of hundred bows (cubits), even as Garuḍa would fling (an ordinary) serpent, and stood as before.

5. Regaining his consciousness, Keśin sprang to his feet. Opening his mouth wide in violent wrath, he fiercely attacked Hari. Smiling fearlessly, Hari thrust his left arm into Keśin's mouth as a serpent enters a hole.

* Not found in the text of ŚR but recorded in the texts of VR., VJ., VB. and SD. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava annotators follow ŚR and do not comment on it.

6. When Keśin tried to bite Kṛṣṇa's arms his teeth dropped down at the touch of the Lord's arm as if at the touch of red-hot iron. And the Lord's arm thrust in the interior part of his body went on growing immensely like dropsy, when neglected.

7. With his breath (passage) choked by the (disproportionately) swelling arm of Kṛṣṇa, he kicked up his legs, perspired profusely all over the body, and with its eyes rolling, discharging excretion, he fell down dead on the ground.

8. Extricating his arm from out of the body of Keśī (which was burst open at various places) like a ripe cucumber, the mightly-armed Kṛṣṇa was not even slightly touched with pride, even though he effortlessly killed his enemies, but was glorified in songs and showered over with flowers by the wondering gods.

9. Oh king! Thereafter the divine sage Nārada, the foremost of devotees of the Lord, approached Kṛṣṇa of noble behaviour and conferred with him in privacy as follows:

10. "Oh Kṛṣṇa (the enchanter of the world)! Oh Kṛṣṇa of incomprehensible nature! Oh Lord of *yogī*! The absolute Ruler of the world! Oh Vāsudeva (the pervader of the universe) and the abode of all! Oh the most prominent among the Sātvatas (the Yādava clan)! Oh Almighty Lord![1]

11. Like unto fire lying dormant in fuel, you alone are the Inner Controller of all beings. Remaining unrevealed, you abide in the hearts of every being as a witness to everything. You are the Supreme Person, the Controller of the universe.

12. Depending entirely upon your own Self, You evolved *guṇas* through your *Māyā* potency. The Almighty Lord of unfailing will power as you are, you create, protect, and devour (destroy) this universe with those *guṇas*.

13. Such as you are, you have incarnated yourself on the earth for the annihilation of the *daityas* (demons), goblins

1. ŚR. : Nārada glosses over the disclosure about Kṛṣṇa to Kaṁsa by telling Him, "You are the Almighty Lord specially incarnated for relieving the earth of its burden of Daityas. Now You be active, finish with them and protect the Universe."

and *rākṣasas* that have been born as kings and for protecting those who abide by the canons of righteousness (or your votaries.)

14. Fortunately enough this demon Keśin who assumed the form of a horse and terrifically frightened at whose neighing, gods (the eye-lid-less beings) deserted the heaven, has been easily killed by you, as in a sport.

15. Oh Omnipresent Lord! Day after tomorrow, I shall witness Cāṇūra, Muṣṭika and other wrestlers, as also the elephant (Kuvalayāpīḍa) as well as Kaṁsa slain by you in broad day-light.

16. Thereafter I shall see the slaying of the demon Pañcajana (who was a conch-dweller) Kālayavana, Mura and Naraka as well as bringing down (from heaven the celestial tree) Pārijāta after defeating Indra.

17. After that I shall witness your marriages with the daughters of warriors (like Bhīṣmaka, Rukmiṇī's father) by offering your personal valour as the dowry (i.e. by defeating the opposition) as also the absolvement of Nṛga[1] from sin at Dvārakā.

18. Thereafter I would see the recovery of the jewel Syamantaka and a spouse (Jāmbavatī) along with it and the restoration of his son to a Brāhmaṇa from the abode of Death.

19. (I shall see later) the destruction of Pauṇḍraka.[2] and burning down the city of Kāśī, the death of Dantavaktra and slaying of Śiśupāla, the king of Cedi in the great sacrifice Rājasūya, performed by Yudhiṣṭhira).

20. It will be my privilege to see whatever other heroic deeds your Lordship would perform while dwelling in Dvārakā and they shall be eulogised in songs by poets on the earth.

1. Nṛga—A king of Ikṣvāku race, famous for his gifts of cows to Brāhmaṇas. One day, due to oversight and without being aware of it, he gifted a cow which was already given by him to another Brāhmaṇa. For this sin, he was born as a Chameleon but was absolved of all sins at the touch of Kṛṣṇa and went to heaven—vide *infra* 10.64.10.

2. *Pauṇḍraka* : King of ancient Kārūṣa. His name was Vāsudeva. On hearing of Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa, he sent him a message to surrender all his special royal emblem and worship him. Kṛṣṇa invaded Kārūṣa with a big army and killed Pauṇḍraka Vāsudeva who used to wield artificial Sudarśana discus etc. like Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva.—vide *infra* 10.66.7-21

21. After that I shall see you in the form of Death or time-spirit intent on destroying the whole universe and the annihilation of Akṣauhiṇīs (Divisions) of armies with you in the role of Arjuna's charioteer.

22. We approach, for protection, the glorious Lord who is entirely constituted of perfectly pure knowledge and has all his purposes accomplished as he is well-established in his own blissful nature; whose will is never futile; and due to whose spiritual refulgence the stream of *guṇas* originating from Māyā is ever warded off.

23. I lay prostrate before you, the leader of Yadus, Vṛṣṇis and Sātvatas—the leader (yourself) who are the supreme Ruler, and who have brought forth all this varied creation (the phenomenal world of differences) through his own Māyā and have assumed a human form for the sake of sporting.

*Śrī Śuka said*:

24. In this way, the sage Nārada, the foremost among the votaries who was delighted to see him, paid obeisance to Kṛṣṇa, the Chief Yadus and departed with his permission.

25. And Lord Kṛṣṇa also, having killed Keśin in a fight, tended the cows along with other cowherds who were highly pleased with him for his heroic act and enhanced the joy and happiness of the inhabitants of Vraja.

26. On one occasion, while they were grazing the cattle on the table-land high up on the mountain, the cowherd boys played the game of hide and seek in which some *gopas* became thieves (or cattle-lifters) and others guards (or policemen).

27. At that time, some played the part of thieves while others became guards, while some others played the role of sheep (to be lifted). In this way they indulged in the game fearlessly, Oh King!

28. Vyoma, the son of the Asura Maya who was a past-master in black magic, assumed the form of a cowherd and playing the role of a cattle-thief carried away a great many cowherd-boys who acted the part of goats.

29. The mighty Asura threw each cowherd-boy so carried in the cave of that mountain, and closed its entrance

with a rock. In this way four or five boys remained (outside the cave).

30. Noticing the vile act of that Asurā, Kṛṣṇa, the protector of the righteous, forcibly caught hold of him while kidnapping the cowherds, even as a lion would do to a wolf.

31. The mighty demon resumed his original form big like a mountain. Being suffocated with his grip, he wanted to extricate himself but could not do so.

32. Catching hold of him by both his hands, he dashed the Asura to the ground and killed him in the way of sacrificial beasts, while gods were witnessing it from heaven.

33. Having broken open the rock that blocked the entrance to the cave, he brought the cowherds out of that perilous situation. Glorified by gods and cowherds, he returned to his own Gokula.

## CHAPTER THIRTYEIGHT

*The Arrival of Akrūra to Gokula*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. Having stayed at Mathurā that night[1] the highly intelligent Akrūra mounted a chariot and proceeded to Nanda's Vraja.

2. On his way, the highly fortunate Akrūra who was filled with extreme devotion to the lotus-eyed Lord reflected to himself as follows :—

3. "What auspicious act has been done by me ! What austere penance I have performed ! Or what gift to a deserving person has been donated by me, by virtue of which I am going to see Lord Kṛṣṇa today.

4. Just as recitation and study of the Vedas is impossible to a person born in the Śūdra class, I consider that gaining even the sight of Kṛṣṇa of excellent renown is very

1. Vide Supra 10.36.40.

difficult for me, inasmuch as my mind is addicted to sensual pleasures.

5. Perhaps that may not happen that way. Even though I may be a vile person, I may be blessed with the sight of the Immortal Lord Kṛṣṇa. Sometimes a person carried along with the current of time, may get to the other shore of *saṁsāra*.

6. To-day all my evils (sins) are destroyed, and my birth has achieved its highest objective in that now I shall bow down to the glorious Lord's lotus-feet which are contemplated by *yogins*.

7. Verily Kaṁsa has shown a great favour to me as, being deputed by him, I shall see the lotus-feet of Lord Hari who has now incarnated in this world and by the lustre of whose circle of toe-nails, people in the former ages have got over the darkness of *Saṁsāra* which is so very difficult to cross.

8. The Lord's feet are worshipped by gods Brahmā, Śiva and others, by goddess Lakṣmī, by sages and by Sātvatas (Yādavas or his devotees)—feet which wandered in the forest along with his companions for grazing the cows and which are tinged with the saffron applied to the breasts of Gopīs.

9. Verily, as the deer go round by my right side (an auspicious omen), I believe I shall certainly behold today the face of Mukunda (Kṛṣṇa) with its charming cheeks and shapely nose, its smiling glances and reddish lotus-eyes, covered over with curly locks of hair.

10. How strongly I do yearn that today I shall be blessed with the audience (vision) of god Viṣṇu, the abode of beauty and excellence, who by his own Divine will has incarnated as a human being for lightening the burden of the earth. In case it so happens, it will be undeniable that the very existence of my eyes has achieved its fulfilment.

11. Though he is merely the witness of the Cause and the effect, he is devoid of egoism. By virtue of his lustre (lustre-like Spiritual Knowledge), he has dispelled the darkness of ignorance or Nescience and the consequent notions of differentiation and misapprehensions resulting from it. By his will, he is, however, found to be sportively engaged in the

houses (of Gopīs, arbours of trees in the Vṛndāvana forest) in the company of Jīvas created in himself through his Māyā Potency which, under his supervision and control, invests them with the life-spirit, the senses and mind or intellect.

12. The words describing his excellent attributes, exploits and incarnations which are capable of destroying all the sins of the world and of conferring auspicious blessings, resuscitate, contribute to the beauty and secure sanctity to the world. But words which do not describe them (howsoever ornamental and elegant they be) are like decorations of a dead body.

13. The Almighty Lord who brings about the felicity and blessings to the great gods who abide by the injunctions laid down by him[1], has descended into the clan of the Sātvatas. It is reported that the Supreme Ruler now stays at Vraja spreading all around his glory, which, due to its being auspicious to all beings, is sung by gods.

14. Inasmuch as I have been witnessing auspicious omens from the dawn, I believe that to-day I shall certainly behold him—the one great goal of the noble souls, the Father (or the Preceptor) of the world, the most lovable and charming to the three worlds, a veritable grand feast to those who are blest with a sight—manifesting a form which is the coveted-most abode of the goddess Śrī.

15. And as soon as I see them, I shall immediately get down from the chariot and will certainly bow down directly to the feet of those two Almighty rulers of the Universe, the Prime Personalities—Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma whose feet have been merely intellectually grasped and meditated upon for Self-realization even by *yogīs* (but have never been able to visualize them actually). Along with them I shall pay respects to their cowherd-friends and to all the beings residing in the forest of Vṛndāvana.

16. (Now he covets the touch of the Lord's hand and hopes that the Lord would fulfill his longing.) Will not that Omnipresent Lord place his lotus-palm on the head of mine who have prostrated myself at the soles of his feet—his hands

1. ŚR specifies these as *varṇāśrama-dharma.*

which have afforded protection to all men who being terrified of the serpent in the form of Time (or Death) seek resort to them ? (I heartily yearn for this favour).

17. By offering worship to those very palms Kauśika (Indra who is reported to have worshipped it on an occasion) and the demon-king Bali (who offered water in token of the gift of three paces of land to the Dwarf-Viṣṇu) attained sovereignty over the three worlds and which, by their very (cool and) fragrant touch like the *Saugandhika* lotus (noted for its specially sweet smell) alleviated the fatigue of the damsels of Vraja during the *rāsa*-sport and thus refreshed them.

18. Though deputed by Kaṁsa, I am sure, he will entertain no hostile attitude to me as his enemy. For the Immortal[1] Lord is Omniscient and can see everything in the universe. Being the Supreme Soul (*Kṣetrajña*) he will see with his pure (unclouded and unprejudiced) vision what is desired inside and outside of the heart of everyone.

19. How strongly I yearn for it ! If he, with a merciful eye, looks smilingly at me who am prostrate at his feet, who with folded palms have concentrated on the soles of his feet, I shall instantaneously get thoroughly absolved of all sins, and with all my fears of *saṁsāra* dispelled, shall enjoy exquisite joy and Supreme bliss.

20. Would that when he would, with his mighty arms, embrace me, his best friend and well-wisher, his clansman who look upon him exclusively as my God, my soul (body) will be highly sanctified immediately and the fetters of *karman* lie shattered thenceforth.

21. When, after enjoying the privilege of being embraced by him (lit. having a personal contact with him), I shall stand bowing down to him with folded palms and he will address me, "Uncle Akrūra", I shall feel that our coming into life (birth) has achieved its purpose. Fie upon the life of that being who is not respected in such a way by the worshipful Lord.

22. No one is beloved of him or an intimate friend of him nor is any one disagreeable, hateful or worthy of indiffe-

1. Lord with unfailing knowledge—VT.

rent treatment to him[1]. He however, attends upon his devotees just as the celestial wish-yielding tree grants[2] the desire of a person when he is resorting to it.

23. And moreover, his elder brother Balarāma, the best in the Yadu-clan, will embrace me with a smile. When I shall be humbly bowing with folded palms, he would take me by my hands and usher me into his house. When I shall be received with due formalities by all his relatives, he will enquire of Kaṁsa's behaviour towards his relatives and clansmen.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

24. Oh King, while Akrūra, the son of Śvaphalka was contemplating about Lord Kṛṣṇa, he arrived by his chariot at Gokula, when the sun was reaching the setting mountain (the western horizon)

25. In Vraja, he noticed the foot-prints of the Lord, the sacred dust of whose feet is respectfully received with their crowns (i.e. heads) by all the protectors of the worlds—foot-prints which are distinguished with the marks of a lotus, a barly seed, a goad and such other characteristics and are auspiciously ornamental to the earth.

26. His impatience heightened to its climax through the ecstasy of delight at their sight, his body thrilled with the excitement of love with his hair standing on ends, with his eyes bedimmed with tears (lit. tear-drops), he jumped from the chariot and exclaiming, "How blessed and rare are these particles of the dust from Lord's feet", he prostrated himself and rolled over them.

27. This is the real ultimate purpose of life (*puruṣārtha*) of all beings invested with a body that they emulate the ecstatic mental state and behaviour of Akrūra since the moment he received Kaṁsa's order to bring Kṛṣṇa, without any hypocrisy, fear or worry at the sight of Hari's image, hearing his glory etc.

1. Cf. *samo'haṁ sarva-bhūtesu na me dveṣyosti na priyaḥ* etc. —BG. 9.29.
2. grants according to merits the deserving fruit—VJ. (*sva-sva-yogya-phaladānena*)

28. There, in the enclosure meant for milking cows, he saw Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma wearing yellow and blue garments respectively and with eyes beautiful like lotuses in the autumn.

29. They were *Kiśora* (lads between eleven to fifteen years) in age, dark-blue and white in complexion (respectively), the abodes of beauty and affluence (also bearing *Śrī-vatsa* mark in the case of Kṛṣṇa), with mighty arms and charming countenance, prominent among the beautiful, possessing the might and prowess of young elephants.

30. The noble-souled pair of brothers ornamented the (ground in) Vraja with (the prints of) their feet marked with the (figures of) a banner, a Vajra, a goad and a lotus and their smiling eyes expressed compassion.

31. They had taken their bath and had their person besmeared with fragrant pigments (such as sandal-paste). They wore wreaths of flower and *Vana-mālās* and were immaculately attired. They expressed noble yet attractive playfulness.

32. They were the Foremost and the first ancient-most Persons, the cause of the world and the protectors thereof. They had descended on the world in their personal rays (*aṁśas*) as Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa for the good of the world.

33. By their personal splendour they dispelled the darkness of the directions (all over the world). They appeared respectively like a mountain of emerald and a mount of silver both chased in gold[1], Oh King!

34. So overwhelmed with devout affection was that Akrūra that he quickly jumped down from the chariot, and fell prostrate like a stick near the feet of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa.

35. With his eyes flooded with tears of joy at the sight of the glorious Lord and with hair standing all over his body, he was not able even to introduce himself to them as his throat was choked with love and emotion.

1. The problem is how could the dark-blue Kṛṣṇa dispel darkness. VJ. says Kṛṣṇa was like the sun and the 'dark-splendour' (*Kṛṣṇa-prabhā*) of the sun dispels darkness.

VR. differs : Kṛṣṇa was like a big emerald set in the middle of gold while Balarāma was like a diamond inlaid in a dark background.

36. Being affectionate to those who have completely surrendered themselves to him, the Lord who understood him (as to who he was and the purpose of his arrival etc.), drew Akrūra near him with his hands, characterised with the mark of discus, and embraced him as he was pleased with him.

37. The noble-minded Balarāma embraced Akrūra who was bowing low before him. Holding his clasped palms by his own, he led him to his house along with his younger brother Kṛṣṇa.

38. After enquiring about his journey (whether he faced any troubles etc.) and offering him a high seat, Balarāma washed his feet with due formality and offered him articles of *Madhuparka* (such as honey, ghee, curds, water).

39. Having presented a cow to the guest and after massaging him as he was fatigued, the powerful Lord served to him with reverence, preparation of pure food with a variety of excellences.

40. When his meal was over, Balarāma, the expert in the highest *dharma* (viz. proper reception of guest) again delighted him by offering articles like fragrant betel-leaf, scenting his mouth, perfumes and sweet-smelling garland.

41. When the customary formalities were over, Nanda enquired : "Oh Dāśārha (Descendant of Daśārha) ! How do you manage to get on with the regime of ruthless Kaṁsa—you who are now no better than sheep tended by a butcher.

42. That blood-thirsty wicked Kaṁsa has killed the children of his cousin (sister) even while she was bitterly crying. We wonder what safety or happiness there could be to you, his subjects.

43. Having thus been honoured by Nanda in sweet words, Akrūra recovered from the fatigue of the journey by such polite enquiries.

## CHAPTER THIRTYNINE

*Akrūra returns with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma*

*Śrī Śuka continued* :

1. Seated comfortably on a couch and received with high respect by Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, he (Akrūra) realized all the aspirations he cherished on his way to Gokula.

2. Is there anything unattainable to a person when the glorious Lord, the very abode of goddess Śrī, becomes propitious? However, those who are exclusively devoted to him expect nothing from him, Oh King !

3. When the supper was over, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, enquired about the treatment meted out by Kaṁsa to his Kinsmen and his further plans in the matter.

*The glorious Lord enquired* :[1]

4. Oh gentle-natured uncle ! It is good that you have come. I hope you had a comfortable journey. May be well with you all. Are all our (near and distant) kinsmen[2] and friends un-harassed (by Kaṁsa) and free from ailments ?

5. Dear uncle ! It is certainly not very consistent on my part to enquire after the welfare of our kinsmen and that of their descendants (or of the subjects in general), so long as this co-called maternal uncle Kaṁsa, the very bane (lit. disease) of the family, is prospering.

6. Alas ! It is for my sake that my venerable parents, despite their innocence, had to undergo immense sufferings. It is for me that their sons were murdered and they had to remain in chains in the prison.

7. It is our good fortune that today we could have a sight of our relative—a sight I had been coveting for long, Oh gentle-natured uncle ! Be pleased to explain to us the purpose of your visit. Oh uncle.

1. The following four verses (4,5,6 and 7) are not found in VJ's text.

2. ŚR. explains : *jñāti*—near relatives. They are *sapiṇḍa*; *bāndhavas* are distant and hence *a-sapiṇḍa*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

8. When thus enquired by Lord Kṛṣṇa, Akrūra, the descendant of Madhu, described in details the history and rationale of Kaṁsa's deep-rooted hostility to the Yadu clan, his attempts on the life of Vasudeva.

9. He reported to Kṛṣṇa the message (inviting them on the pretext of *dhanur-yāga* and the proposed attempt on their life through Cāṇūra and others) and the mission for which he had been deputed as an emissary by Kaṁsa and what Nārada had narrated to Kaṁsa about his (Kṛṣṇa's) birth from Vasudeva.

10. On hearing the message from Akrūra, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the vanquishers of hostile warriors, laughed loudly, and they communicated to their foster-father Nanda the command of the king Kaṁsa.

11. He (Nanda) on his part ordered the cowherds.: "Let all the yield of cows (such as milk, ghee) as well as presents (of various kinds) as tribute, be taken with you. Let the bullock-carts be kept ready.

12. Tomorrow we have to go to Mathurā where we shall be paying as tribute the choicest products of our cows' yield to the king. We shall also witness there a very grand festival for attending which (it is reported that) all the people from the country (of Śūrasena) are going." Nanda, the Gopa chief, got this order proclaimed all over his Vraja, through the security officer of the Vraja.

13. The cowherd women (to whom Kṛṣṇa was their very life) were deeply distressed at heart on hearing that Akrūra had come to Vraja to take away Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa to the capital city (Mathurā).

14. Some had the splendour of their countenance withered by the hot breaths due to the agony of heart caused by hearing that news. Some became so much beside themselves through overwhelming grief that they got their garments loosened, bangles dropping and braids of hair dishevelled.

15. Through their concentrated contemplation on Kṛṣṇa, some Gopīs got all the functions of their sense-organs ceased and became insensible to this external world, as if they had ascended to the realm of the Supreme Self.

16. Some other Gopīs lost their consciousness as they remembered the wonder-fully phrased speeches of Kṛṣṇa touching their very heart and expressed with warm loving smiles.

17-18. Musing over Kṛṣṇa's extremely graceful gait and manner of behaviour, his amiable smiles and loving glances, his witty repartee dispelling sorrows and his extra-ordinary exploits, the Gopīs terrified and distressed at the very thought of impending separation, met together in groups and with tears flowing over their cheeks (faces) and hearts absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, they complained :

*Gopīs said* :

19. Alas ! Oh Creator ! You have not the slightest compassion anywhere in you, inasmuch as, you bring together embodied beings in friendliness and love and unnecessarily separate them before they have accomplished their desired object. Your whimsical behaviour is childish (lit. like the purposeless behaviour of a child).

20. It is not a good act (in fact a wicked) act on your part that you, having first manifested to us the countenance of Kṛṣṇa covered over with ringlets of dark hair, charming due to its beautiful cheeks and prominent nose, beautiful with a beaming smile that dispelled all grief, now takes it away from our view.

21. You are really cruel as (disguising yourself) under the nomenclature Akrūra[1], you like an irrational person, are depriving us of our very eye given by you to us. It is with that we visualized the excellence of your creative capacity (completely exhibited) even in a part (limb) of Kṛṣṇa, the slayer of Madhu.

22. Alas ! What a pity ! The friendship of Nanda's son is of a momentary nature. He is so much fond of new company that he does not condescend to cast a glance at us who have been eagerly longing for him and who, being

1. You will say it is Akrūra and not I, who is taking away Kṛṣṇa. It is not possible for others to do this. It is you who have come here under the name Akrūra—ŚR.

beguiled by his enchanting acts, have openly accepted his slavery forsaking our homes, relatives, sons and husbands.

23. For the ladies of the city (Mathurā), their night will dawn very happily. All the benedictions have been (i.e. will be) definitely realized by them. For as Kṛṣṇa enters the city, they will drink (with their eyes) the countenance of the Lord of Vraja (Kṛṣṇa) full of intoxicating (yet) nectar-like smiles, the charm of which is enhanced by lovely side-glances.

24. Oh ladies ! Even if Mukunda (Kṛṣṇa) is self-controlled and independent and has his relatives in Vraja, how can he ever return to us, poor rustic women, when his mind is captivated by the sweet, soft words, and fascinated by the bashful smiles and amorous deportment of the ladies of Mathurā.

25. Today, certainly there will be a high feast to the eyes of Dāśārhas, Bhojas, Andhakas, Vṛṣṇis and Sātvatas and those who will see passing by the road (in the chariot) Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, the consort of goddess Śrī (Lakṣmī), the very abode of excellences.

26. As this fellow wants to carry off Kṛṣṇa who is dearer than life itself to us, beyond the known paths (to a far-off land beyond our reach), without (in any way) consoling deeply-grieving persons (like us), Akrūra (not cruel) ought not to be the name of such a ruthless fellow who is (as a matter of fact) extremely cruel.

27. Look ! without feeling the slightest feeling (lit. witness) of sympathy or mercy he (Kṛṣṇa) has comfortably occupied his seat in the chariot; following him the haughty Gopas (cowherds) are hastily speeding up in their bullock carts. (This departure of Kṛṣṇa) is treated with indifference by the elders (of Vraja). It appears that hostile Destiny is working against us today.

28. Approaching Kṛṣṇa (the Lord of Lakṣmī) We shall dissuade him (from going). What can the elders of the family and relatives do unto us whose hearts have been rendered afflicted and melancholy by Fate, by bringing about separation from Mukunda (Kṛṣṇa) which is unbearable even for half a minute, (under such circumstances even death is no terror to us.)

29. Oh cowherd women! How can we get over without him the unending darkness of separation from him, with whom we felt like a moment the nights indulged in rāsa dance (and similar other sports) the charm of which was enhanced by his warm love, charming smiles, sweet whispers, playful glances and embraces?

30. How can we (even manage to) live without Kṛṣṇa who at the even tide, with Balarāma (the incarnation of Śeṣa) as his compassion, and surrounded by cowherds, used to enter Vraja, playing on his flute, and with his curly hair and wreaths of flowers soiled heavily with dust raised by the hoofs of the cattle, and captivate our hearts by casting at us his smiling side-glances?

*Śrī Śuka said* :

31. Talking to each other in this manner, and extremely distressed at the thought of separation from Kṛṣna, the women of Vraja whose hearts were deeply attached to Kṛṣṇa threw to winds their sense of bashfulness and cried loudly, (uttering his various names:) "Oh Govinda ! Alas Dāmodara! Oh Mādhava".

32.* When it was sun-rise, Akrūra finished his morning *Sandhyā* (prayer to the sun) and other religious duties, and drove his chariot (along with Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma) without paying any heed to the lamentations of womenfolk.

33. Cowherds, headed by Nanda, followed them closely in their bullock-carts taking with them abundant tribute in the form of pitchers full of the yield of cows (such as milk, curds, ghee).

34. The cowherd women also followed their beloved Kṛṣṇa feeling a bit delighted when he turned round and cast an affectionate glance at them and waited[1] for his command not to follow him.

*A ŚR. gives an additional verse here :

*Krūram Akrūrataḥ śrutvā Kaṁsaṁ Kaṁsaniṣūdanaḥ /*
*gopī-manoʼthārāmaḥ sa-Rāmaḥ svapuraṁ yayau //*

Having heard from Akrūra (the report about) cruel Kaṁsa, Kṛṣṇa, the slayer of Kaṁsa, the delight of the Gopīs (by fulfilling their desires) went to his capital (Mathurā) along with Balarāma.

1. Waited for his reply to the message sent by them through an emissary and stood on an eminence within the range of his view—VT.

35. Perceiving that the Gopīs were deeply tormented at his departure, Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Yadus, comforted them through a messenger that he would return soon.[1]

36. As long as the flag (of the chariot) was visible and as long as the dust raised by the chariot could be seen, they stood motionless like figures painted in pictures, as they had deputed their minds after him.

37. At long last, being disappointed at the return of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they too returned and for relieving themselves of the sorrow of separation, they spent days (and nights) in glorifying his deeds and pastimes in songs.

38. In his chariot swift in speed like the wind, the Lord along with Balarāma and Akrūra arrived (at noon) on the bank of the Yamunā that absolves one of all sins.

39. After (washing his hands and feet) performing the Ācamana (ritual sipping of water), he drank the sweet crystal-clear water of the Yamunā. Going near a grove of trees (where the chariot was standing), he got into it alongwith Balarāma.

40. Akrūra on his part seated them (comfortably) in the chariot, and (requesting them not to leave their seats as he was afraid of enemies) he took leave of them. Coming to the pool of Yamunā (known as 'Ananta tīrtha'), he performed ablution according to *śāstric* injunctions.

41. As he plunged into the river water reciting the ancient Vedic *mantras* (of *Agha-marṣaṇa*), that Akrūra (being of purified mind) saw therein both Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa together.

42. 'How is it that the two sons of Vasudeva who were seated in the chariot are down here? In that case they must not be in the chariot.' With this suspicion, he emerged out of water and looked for them.

43. Perceiving both of them seated (in the chariot) as before, he took, a plunge again thinking, "Was my vision of them both in the water unreal?"

1. VT. strongly objects to the interpretation : "I shall be sending you messages and thus see you through messengers though personally I cannot come", for this contradicts the words of Kṛṣṇa's special emissary Uddhava :

*āgamiṣyatyadīrgheṇa kālena Vrajam acyutaḥ /*

44-45. Again he saw in that very water, Śeṣa, the Lord of Serpents—a resplendent God with one thousand heads, with crowns adorning his one thousand hoods, wearing a blue garment, white as lotus-fibers, (enormous) like the white snow-clad mountain Kailāsa with its (golden) peaks. He was being praised by Siddhas, Cāraṇas and Gandharvas as well as by Asuras, with their heads bowed down in salutation.

46. He saw on Śeṣa's lap (coils) another (Supreme) Person (Lord Viṣṇu) bluish dark like a cloud in complexion, clad in yellow silken garment, with four arms, eyes reddish like lotus-petals and very serene and gentle in appearance.

47. He had a beautiful and gracious countenance with enchanting smiles and glances, well-shaped eyebrows, prominent nose, beautiful ears, charming cheeks and reddish lips.

48. He had long and mighty arms, high shoulders and broad chest—the home of the goddess Śrī, a conch-shaped neck, a deep navel and stomach shaped like a tender leaf with three folds.

49. He had well-formed loins and hips, pair of well-developed thighs like those of an elephant and a pair of beautiful knees and shapely shanks.

50. His ankles were prominent and were surrounded by the halo of light radiating from his reddish toe-nails. His lotus-feet were specially charming with petal-like tender toes and (a pair of) big toes.

51-52. He was shining brilliantly with a diadem, bracelets, armlets decked with the most precious jewels as well as with a girdle, a sacred thread, necklace, anklets and ear-rings. He held a lotus, conch, discus and a mace in each of his hands. He had the *Śrī vatsa* mark on his chest, and a resplendent *Kaustubha* gem was shining at his neck. He wore a garland of special sylvain flowers (called Vanamālā).

53-54. He was being praised in hymns with distinct words expressive of different sentiments, by his attendants, the prominent among whom were Sunanda and Nanda, by sages like Sanaka (and his three brothers Sanandana, Sanātana, Sanat kumāra), by the rulers of gods like god Brahmā, Rudra and others, by nine foremost of Brāhmaṇas (such as Marīci, Kāśyapa and others) and by the most prominent of the Lord's

pure-hearted devotees like Prahlāda, Nārada and Uparicara Vasu.

55. He was waited upon personally by the deities like Śrī (presiding deity over affluence), Puṣṭi (goddess of nourishment), Sarasvatī (presiding over speech), Kānti (goddess of beautiful complexion and splendour), Kīrti (presiding deity of fame), Tuṣṭi (goddess of contentment), Ilā (the Earth goddess), Ūrjā (goddess of energy and strength), Vidyā (goddess presiding over spiritual enlightenment), Avidyā (the goddess of Nescience), by Śakti (Power) and Māyā (the deluding potency of the Lord).

56-57. He was extremely delighted to have the vision of that Lord and overwhelmed with intense devotion and thrilled with joy (with his hair standing on their ends) his eyes wet with tears of love, Akrūra of the Sāttvata clan summoned courage, and bowed down with his head. And folding his pair of palms, with concentrated attention, he slowly began to praise in voice choked with emotions.

## CHAPTER FORTY

*Akrūra's Hymn (in praise of the Lord)*

1A. *VJ.'s Text adds* :

At this vision of the Lord, Akrūra's heart and senses became filled with divine joy and serenity. Bending his neck (head) down with devotion, he praised the Lotus-eyed Lord.

*Akrūra said* :

1. I bow down to you as you are the Prime cause of all causes (like *Mahat* etc. from which the Universe evolved). You are the veritable Nārāyaṇa (the Deity reposing over the cosmic waters), the In-dweller in all bodies, the First Principle not subject to change or modification. It is from the lotus sprouted from his navel that god Brahmā, the Creator of the Universe appeared. It is from him (Brahmā) that the universe was evolved.

2.* All the causes of the evolution of the world such as (the elements) the earth, water, fire, air, the sky and its originator-*ahaṃkāra*, the principle of cosmic intelligence called *mahat*, *prakṛti* (Primordial matter) and the cause thereof (viz. *Puruṣa*, the mind, the senses (and organs) and their objects and all the gods presiding over them, are all evolved out of your Supreme Person (*Śrī mūrti*).

3. These—god Brahma[1] and others—being material (or other-than-the spirit) do not know the essential nature of yours who are the real *ātman* (Supreme self). For god Brahmā is conditioned by or enveloped in the *guṇas* of *Prakṛti*. As such he is unable to congnize your essential nature which is beyond all *guṇas*.

4. Certainly, the righteous and practitioners of yoga worship you directly as the Supreme Person, the Ruler of the Universe-as the Indweller of the body (*Or* in the senses and organs of the bodies of every *jīva*), presiding over all material bodies (or the great elements like the ether, air, fire etc.), presiding over the bodies of god.

5. Some twice-borns (e g. Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas) follow the path of action—*Karma mārga*, and betake themselves to the course of sacrificial performance. With the help of the knowledge of three Vedas (*Ṛk*, *Sāman* and *Yajus*), they worship none but you under the names and forms of different divinities in extensive sacrificial sessions.

6. Having renounced all activities[2] (pertaining to (*karma-mārga*, they have attained tranquillity and control of senses.[3] Such men of spiritual wisdom worship the Embodiment of

*. VR presents the *viśiṣṭādvaita* stance : He shows that this verse described the Lord both as the material cause as well as the efficient cause. "From Your Person Brahman characterised by *mūla-prakṛti* as his body is transformed into *mahat*, *ahaṁkāra*."

1. VJ : Jīva and others—Like inanimate things, even *jīva* cannot cognize your nature. The *jīvas* are observed with the false notion that the body and soul are identical or they themselves are the absolute masters.

VJ. These—Brahmā and others cannot cognize Your real nature as they are distinct and different from your self.

2. VR. : give up all Vedic rites performed for attaining their desires which give rise to egotism and passions

OR : realize that Vedic rites are a form of worshipping the Lord.

3. VJ. : Unswerving devotion of the Lord exclusively.

Knowledge through sacrifice in the form of spiritual knowledge i.e. meditation on the Lord).

7.* According to the injunctions laid by you (in the (*Pañcarātra āgama*) some consecrate their person[1] become absorbed in you and worship you as per procedure laid down by you (in the *Pañcarātra āgama*), as the One Deity abiding in many emanations (*Vyūhas* such as Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa. Pradyumna and Aniruddha) or as one form (viz. Nārāyaṇa).

8. Others (i.e. devotees of Lord Śiva) adore you only in the form of Śiva[2] as per procedure ordained by god Śiva (*in Śaiva āgamas*) but with difference of details according to the teachers (of various Śaiva sects like *Kāpālika Kālāmukha, Pāśupata* etc.), Oh glorious Lord!

9.* Those who are votaries of other deities and have thus reposed their faith and devotion unto them (thinking these deities as different from you), all of them really worship you who pervade them all, Oh Supreme Lord.

10. Oh Lord ! Just as rivers with their sources in mountains and flooded by raining clouds enter into the sea from all directions, similarly all paths (of devotion and worship) lead ultimately unto you.

11. *Sattva, rajas* and *tamas* are nothing but modifications of your *Prakṛti* (potency). And everything from inanimate immovables to the highest deity Brahmā, are the products of Prakṛti and are woven warf and woof in Prakṛti[3] (and therefore not different from you. You pervade them all)

* After describing the paths of Karma, Sāṅkhya, and Yoga, he mentions *Pañcarātra* and *Śaiva* systems in verses 7 and 8.

1. ŚR. : as per Vaiṣṇavite and Śaivite procedures.

VR. : By the five consecrating rites prescribed in the *Pāñcarātra āgamas.*

SD.: quotes a verse enumerating the five *saṁskāras*: *Tāpaḥ puṇḍraṁ tathā nāma mantro yāgaś ca pañcamaḥ*

*tāpa* is branding with representations of discus etc., *Puṇḍra*—mark on the forehead (the rest is easy).

2. VB. In *Tāmasa Kalpa* Viṣṇu assumes the form of Śiva.

*. Cf. *Yepyanya-devatābhaktā yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ /*
*tepi māmeva Kaunteya yajantyavidhipūrvakam //*

BG. 9.23.

3. ŚR : *Or* : and ultimately they merge into *Prakṛti* and *Prakṛti* unto you. In this way all gods etc. are absorbed in you.

12. Hail to you whose mind is perfectly unattached to everything even though you are the In-dwelling soul of everybody and witness to the intellects (minds) of all. This stream of *guṇas* (*saṃsāra*) created by your Nescience operates powerfully on gods, men, and subhuman beings.

13. Fire is regarded as your mouth, the earth as your feet, the sun as your eye, the sky as your navel, cardinal points as your ears, the celestial region (the firmament) as your head, Indra, the ruler of gods your arms, and oceans as your belly and the wind as your vital strength[1].

14. Trees and herbs are the hair on your body; the clouds are the locks of hair on your head; mountains are the bones and nails of your transcendental self; days and the nights are your winking; god Brahmā, the Creater of the world, is your generative organ, and rain shower is regarded as your semen.

15. Oh Immortal Supreme Self! You are the perfect immutable Person who can be comprehended by the mind only. On you are projected worlds teeming with beings along with the protectors of those worlds, just as acquatic beings move in water or insect exists in the *Udumbara* fruit (Indian fig).

16. Whatever forms you assume for your sportive activities in the world, dispel the afflictions and sorrows of people. Hence they sing your glories in joy.

17. I bow to you the Fish incarnation, the cause of the world who moved freely in the cosmic waters of the ocean of deluge. Hail to you who assumed the form of *Hayagriva* (horse-necked god) for killing the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha.

18. Salutations to you Oh gigantic Tortoise, the bearer of mountain Mandara (at the time of churning the ocean for nectar). I bow to you who have assumed the Boar form for the sportive activity of uplifting the earth (from the bottom of the ocean).

19. Oh Lord! The Dispeller of the fear of the righteous! I bow to you the wonderful man-lion. My salutations

1. VT. The verse shows how the Lord pervades all gods.

to you Oh Vāmana who have crossed the three worlds (in one step).

20. Salutations to you Paraśurāma, the chief of Bhṛgus who cut down the forest in the form of haughty Kṣatriyas. I salute to you, Oh Rāmacandra, the best of Raghus, who have killed Rāvaṇa.

21. Hail to you the Lord of Sātvatas ! Who manifested yourself in four divine emanations of Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa (Balarāma), Pradyumna (Kṛṣṇa's son) and Aniruddha (Pradyumna's son).

22. Hail to you Lord Buddha ! Who are absolutely pure but who deluded Daityas and Dānavas (by your anti-Vedic teaching). I bow to you who assumed the form of Kalki and killed the kṣatriyas who were reduced to the stage of Mlecchas (*non-Aryans*).

23. Oh Glorious Lord ! This world of beings is deluded by your māyā potency and wanders in the path of *karma* (*saṁsāra*) with the false notion of me-and-mine i.e. of the body being his own self and property as his own.

24. And I am such a stupid person, Oh Lord Kṛṣṇa ! That I too wander (move in) my body, sons, house, wives, wealth, kith and kins etc. who are really unreal like dream but thinking them to be real.

25. I entertain a contrary notion towards things which are not eternal (e.g. fruit of *karmas*), are not the real self (viz. my body) as well as which are full of troubles (e.g. house, property) and regard them as eternal, real-self and full of happiness). I am enveloped in the darkness of ignorance and take pleasure in the opposite pairs like pleasure and pain and I do not know that you are the most dear to me.

26. Just as an ignorant person does not know that it is really water that is covered by weeds and other water-plants, and abandoning the real water, runs after a mirage, similarly I have turned my face away from you (and am pursuing unrealities like my body, house etc.)

27. Being of poor intellectual capacity and understanding, I am not able to control my mind which is perturbed by desire for enjoyment and activities to attain it, and am dragged here and there by uncontrollable senses.

28. Oh Lord ! I (who am as described above) have approached your feet which are not easily accessible to the unrighteous, regard (the accessibility of your feet) as an act of Grace on your part. Oh God with a lotus in the nevel ! Release from the cycle of births and deaths is possible if one's mind becomes attached to you through the service of saintly persons[1].

29. I bow to you who are the embodiment of Pure Consciousness and the Source of all knowledge. You are the Ruler (of factors e.g. Time-Spirit, Nature, Destiny) that control *Jīvas*; you are the very Brahman of infinite power.

30. Salutations to Lord Vāsudeva, the asylum of all beings. Oh Lord of sense-organs ! I bow down to you. Oh Lord ! Be pleased to protect me who have approached your feet.

## CHAPTER FORTYONE

### *Kṛṣṇa's Arrival at Mathurā*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. Having manifested his (original Viṣṇu) form in the water to Akrūra, the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa withdrew it again, even while he was glorifying him,[2] like an actor (who instantly retires) after playing his role.

2. Noticing that the vision had disappeared, Akrūra emerged from water. He hastily performed the (mid-day) religious duties. He then returned to the chariot still wondering at the vision.

3. Lord Kṛṣṇa (the Controller of Senses) enquired, "have you seen anything miraculous either on the land or in the water or in the sky? I surmise (from your appearance) that you have perceived some such wonder.

1. ŚR. : It is through Your Grace that one gets the opportunity of rendering service to saintly persons which leads to attachment to you, resulting in Final Emancipation from *Saṁsāra*.

2. Despite Akrūra's continuation of praise. This shows Kṛṣṇa's indifference to praise (*anādare ṣaṣṭhī*) —VT

*Akrūra replied* :

4. "Whatever wonders are there on the earth, in the sky or in the water in this world exist in you who constitute the whole of the universe. What marvel can remain un-witnessed by me who have a direct vision of you?

5. Oh Supreme Lord ! When I directly perceive you who accommodate all the marvels within you, what wonder, either on the earth, in the water or the sky could be witnessed by me."

6. Replying him in these words, Akrūra, the son of Gāndinī, drove the chariot and at the end of the day, he brought Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā.

7. People in the country-side who assembled at various stages on the way, became delighted to see the sons of Vasudeva (Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa) and were not able to take away their eyes from them.

8. In the meanwhile, Nanda, the cowherd, and other inhabitants of Vraja who came ahead of them (by a short-cut) stood waiting for them in a park near the city (Mathurā).

9. After joining them (Nanda and his group of cowherds) the glorious Lord of the world took Akrūra by hand while Akrūra was modestly bowing, and spoke to him as if with a laugh.

10. "You may go in advance with the chariot to the city and return home. We shall get down here and after resting for some time, shall go to the city."

*Akrūra requested* :

11. Oh Lord ! I shall not enter Mathurā leaving you both here. It does not behove you, Oh Protector (of the world) who are so kind to your devotees, to forsake me who am your votary.

12. Be pleased to come. Let us go together. Oh Lord ! You transcend sense-perception. Oh best of friends ! Visiting our house along with your elder brother (Balarāma), with your friends and cowherds bless our home with your august presence.

13. Be gracious to sanctify our houses with the dust of your feet as we are after all householders (inevitably committ-

ing five types of sins[1]). For the ancestors and gods including the Fire-god get satisfied and propitiated with the water used for washing your feet (which is kept in a vessel or small reservoir in the courtyard of the house).

14. By washing the pair of your feet the great king Bali attained sanctifying fame, incomparable affluence and supreme sovereignty) as also the goal reached by absolute votaries.

15. The sacred waters (viz. the river Gaṅgā) that washed your feet have sanctified the three worlds, were borne by god Śiva on his ḥead and by contact with which the sons of Sagara attained to the heaven.

16. I bow to you, Oh God of gods, Oh Lord of the universe, the listening and recital of whose glory bring spiritual merit; On the foremost one in the Yadu clan, Oh Nārāyaṇa of glorious reputation."

*The glorious Lord replied* :

17. It is after slaying Kaṁsa who is the enemy of our Yadu clan, that I shall visit your house in company of my elder brother (Balarāma) and shall bring delight to my friends.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

18. Akrūra who was thus replied, became rather disappointed. He, however, entered the city, reported (to Kaṁsa) the account of the mission assigned to him and returned home.

19. The next day in the afternoon, Lord Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by Balarāma and surrounded by the cowherds, entered Mathura with a view to see the city.

20. He saw the city Mathurā with high gate-ways and entrances made of crystals, with huge doors of gold beautified with gold arches. The granaries thereof were made of copper and brass. It was inaccessible due to deep moats around it. Its outskirts were made attractive with parks and beautiful gardens.

1. Manu enumerates five types of inevitable sins caused in the household work such as 'cooking on a stove', 'pounding', 'crushing', 'brushing up of vessel' etc. as follows:

*pañca sūnā gṛhasthasya cullī peṣaṇyupaskarāḥ /*
*kaṇḍanī coda-kumbhaśca-Manu* 3.66

21-22. It appeared beautiful with its quadrangles (where four roads meet) decorated with gold and with mansions of gold with suitable pleasure gardens attached to each of them. It was decorated with guild-halls of different classes of artisans and with buildings of other citizens. It was filled with the joyful cooing of pigeons and joyous notes of the peacocks perching on the window-grills and platforms, eaves (awnings) and seats (under trees) all inlaid with Vaiḍūrya (cat's eyes) diamonds, crystals, sapphires, corals, pearls and emeralds. Its streets, market places and quadrangles were profusely sprinkled with water and were strewn with flowers, sprouts, parched paddy and unbroken rice-grains.

23. He saw that it appeared beautiful for the entrances of houses were decorated with (auspicious objects such as) artistic pitchers full of water, sprinkled with curds and sandal, graced around with flowers and with rows of lamps and with tender foliage, inserted in the pitchers, with trunks of plantain trees and areca nut trees with bunches of fruit on the branches, and festive flags and buntings hoisted over them.

24. Oh King ! When Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the sons of Vasudeva, surrounded by their friends, entered the city by the royal road, women of that city hastily came out to have a look at them, and some eager ones climbed the terraces of their houses.

25. Out of haste some dressed themselves and put on ornaments in the wrong way; some forgot to wear the ornament in pair and put on one ear-ring (leaving the other ear ornamentless), and one anklet (leaving the other foot anklet-less); while others started (with only one eye painted with collyrium) without applying collyrium to the other eye.

26. Hearing the noise (as the sons of Vasudeva approached), some were so overjoyed that they set aside their dishes while taking meals; some besmeared with oil (preliminary to bath) came out (with oily appearance) without taking bath; some rose from sleep (and without taking any wash, ran up to see), while mothers suckling babies hurried forth (leaving their babies half-fed and crying).

27. With his noble gait and deportment like a mighty elephant in an intoxicated stage (exuding ichor), and with

his personality delighting (his consort) the goddess Śrī, the Lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa provided a sumptuous feast to their eyes and captivated their hearts with his noble sportive smiles and glances.

28. The women of Mathurā whose hearts were already deeply attached to him (lit. were melted and rushed after him) through the reports they frequently heard about him, (regarding his excellences, prowess etc.) now espied him personally. They were honoured by being sprinkled with the nectar-like glances and fascinating smiles by him. They embraced that Embodiment of Bliss (mentally) as he entered through the gate-way of their eyes, occupied their hearts (and was in their 'possession'). They were so thrilled with joy that the hair on their body stood on their ends. They felt relieved of the endless agony of their hearts through pangs of separation (from him), Oh subjugator of enemies (e.g. lust, passions etc.)[1]

29. Climbing to the highest terraces of the mansions and with their lotus-like faces blooming with delight, the young damsels showered flowers on Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa.

30. At every stop Brāhmaṇas, being overwhelmed with joy, worshipped them with pots of water (to wash their feet), curds and rice-grains (to be applied to their fore-heads as an auspicious mark) and with wreaths, sandal-paste, perfumes and suitable presents (e. g. fruits, sweetmeats etc.)

31.* The ladies of the city (Mathura) remarked to each other, "Oh ! What great penance must have been performed by cowherd women on account of which they had the privilege to behold at will these two brothers who are themselves a joyous festival to the eyes of the human world.

32. Beholding a certain washerman who was a dyer too coming that way, Kṛṣṇa, the elder brother of Gada[2] asked him to give the excellent, well-washed clothes.

33. "Please give us both suitable clothes becoming to our worthy status. The highest prosperity will certainly be yours for offering us these as gift."

1. ŚR adds : Oh King ! Don't be immersed in the erotic sentiment.

* Not found in VJ's Text.

2. Name of Kṛṣṇa's step-brother, son of Vasudeva and Deva-rakṣitā (Devakī's sister)—Supra 9.24.46-52.

34. Though requested by the glorious Lord who was perfect and possessed of plenty in every respect, the highly arrogant servant of the king (Kaṁsa) got angry and retorted with scorn.

35. "You ill-mannered, rustic hill-dwellers and foresters ! Do you always ever wear such fine clothes ? How do you have the audacity to overstep your limits and to desire to have the royal clothes.

36. Get ye gone, you childish fellow. If you really wish to live, you should never make such requests. Take care. The king's men verily arrest insolent people, beat them (soundly) and strip them of their belongings."

37. While he was thus swaggeringly boasting, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, got enraged and with his finger-tips he severed his head from his trunk.

38. All the servants of the washerman threw down the bundles of clothes and took to their heels in all directions. Kṛṣṇa took the clothes (he wanted).

39. Kṛṣṇa as well as Balarāma put on two pieces of garments (an upper and lower one) of their choice. They distributed the remaining to the (accompanying) cowherds and threw the rest on the ground.

40. Then a weaver was pleased with them and elegently dressed them both with rich multi-coloured clothes in a manner worthy of them.

41. With the variety of excellent clothes and decorations, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma appeared brilliant and most beautiful like two young elephants, one white and the other dark, tastefully adorned for some festivel.

42. Being pleased with him, the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa conferred on him the type of liberation called "similarity of godly form" (in the next world), and superb affluence, strength, wealth, memory and acuteness of sense organs in this world.

43. Then they proceeded to the house of a florist called Sudāman. Seeing them he respectfully rose to receive them and bowed, placing his head on the ground (i. e. lying prostrate before them).

44. He offered them seat and water to wash their feet. He worshipped both of them along with their followers (cowherds) by offering the articles of worship, wreaths of flowers, betel leaves and sandal paste.

45. He submitted, "The very object of our life has been fulfilled, Oh Lord, My race has been sanctified by you. And by your arrival my ancestors, gods and sages have been pleased with me.

46. Both of Your Honour are the ultimate cause of this Universe. It is by your rays that you have descended on this earth for its prosperity and protection.

47. Both of you are the friends and the soul of the world. Even though you are favourable to your devotees, you do not entertain discriminating outlook. You are equal unto all beings.

48. Therefore be pleased to lay down a command on Your servant as to what I should do for you. It is a high favour upon a human being that you direct him to do your service."

49. Oh Great King, Sudāman who was greatly pleased in mind, divined the wishes of them both and he presented them garland made of specially fragrant flowers.

50. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma who were excellently decorated by the garlands, were greatly pleased with him and they, the great bestowers of boons, conferred on him, blessings as he bowed them respectfully and sought their protection.

51. He sought from them the boon of entertaining unswerving devotion unto them who constituted the soul of all, as well as friendship to their devotees and great compassion to all beings.

52. Having given him the boon as well as bestowing on him prosperity that would increase with his descendents and having conferred on him strength, longevity, glory and splendour, the Lord departed with his elder brother.

## CHAPTER FORTYTWO

*Description of the Wrestling Arena*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. While proceeding ahead on the royal road, Kṛṣṇa espied a deformed young woman of charming countenance carrying a vessel containing sandal-paste and other unguents (for smearing and beautifying the body). He asked laughingly just to humour her.

2. "Who are you, Oh lady of shapely thighs? For whom is this vessel of unguents intended? Tell us the truth. Give us both some excellent unguents (out of these). (By this act of yours) you will soon be blessed with good luck."

*The maid-servant said* :

3. "Oh beautiful youth! I am a maid-servant called *Tri-Vakrā* (Deformed at three places viz. at the neck, the breast and the waist), but I am esteemed by (His Majesty) Kaṁsa in (the technique of) preparation of unguents). For the pastes and ointments prepared by me are very much liked by the king of Bhojas.-who else other than you both deserves to be anointed with this?"

4. Her heart being thoroughly captivated by their beauty, comeliness, bewitching smiles, sweet words and loving glances, she besmeared them thickly with the unguent.

5. Then with the upper part of their bodies painted with the unguent, the colour of which was different from that of the complexion of their persons, they both (Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma) appeared very much effulgent.

6. The glorious Lord who was very much pleased with her, decided to straighten up perfectly the hump-backed woman deformed at the three different places, though possessed of a charming countenance, and thereby to show (to the world) the fruit of having a sight of him.

7. Pressing the front part of her feet with his own feet, he held her chin with two fingers of his raised open palm and made her body perfectly straight.

8. Instantly, at the very touch of Kṛṣṇa, she became the loveliest young damsel with all limbs straight and proportionate and shapely, with big buttocks and heavy breasts.

9. Being thus gifted with excellent beauty and noble qualities, she thereupon felt the passion of love enkindled in her. And drawing him by the end of his upper garment, she requested him, beaming with a smile.

10. "Come, Oh hero ! Let us go home. I cannot bear (the idea of going away) leaving you here, now. Please be propitious unto a woman whose mind has been agitated by you, Oh prominent one among men."

11. When solicited thus by the woman, despite the presence of even Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa cast a glance at him and at the faces of cowherds, laughed loudly and spoke to her.

12. "Oh lady with beautiful eye-brows ! After accomplishing the object of my coming here (viz. killing of Kaṁsa) I shall certainly visit your house which relieves the pangs of hearts of men. You are the only resort of homeless wayfarers like us.[1]

13. After taking leave of her in sweet words, as he proceeded through the commercial area of the town (lit. through the streets of the Vaiśya community), he, along with his elder brother and followers was worshipfully received with various presents, betel-leaves, garlands of pearls and precious stones and perfumes by the guilds of merchants.

14.* The minds of the ladies of the merchant communities were so much agitated and overwhelmed with love that they forgot themselves. With loosened garments and braids of hair and slipping bracelets, they stood motionless as if painted in a picture.

15. Thereupon, enquiring with the people about the venue of the Bow-(Sacrifice), the Immutable Lord (Kṛṣṇa) entered the sacrificial-hall and saw the wonderful bow, beauti-

1. VJ. : God is not attached to anyone. But his devotees worship him and become his resort.
VR. : You deserve to be enjoyed.
* Untraced in VJ.'s Text.

ful (and big) like the rainbow (as it was studded with precious stones).

16. It was guarded by many men-at-arms, as it was worshipped and decorated with precious stones and valuables. Though he was prohibited by the attending guards, Kṛṣṇa forcibly caught hold of it.

17. Sportively picking it up with his left hand and fixing its string, Kṛṣṇa of formidable prowess, stretched it to the full and snapped it asunder in two in a second, as an intoxicated elephant would do to a sugarcane. And all men stood a-gazing (in astonishment).

18. As the bow was being broken, the crashing sound filled the sky, the space between the earth and heaven and all the quarters. Hearing that sound, even Kaṁsa was seized with terror.

19. The guards of the bow along with the attendants got enraged. Armed as they were, they were anxious to arrest him. Shouting "Let him be seized and bound down", they encircled him.

20. Perceiving those fellows of wicked intentions, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa flared up in rage, and grasping the two pieces of the broken bow stick, soundly drubbed them all.

21. Having destroyed the battalion of soldiers despatched against them by Kaṁsa, they came out of the gate of the sacrificial hall. As they roamed along, they were delighted to see the affluence of the city.

22. Witnessing their marvellous prowess, splendour, fearlessness and handsome personality, the citizens of Mathura regarded them as two foremost ones among gods.

23. While both of them were thus wandering at will, the sun set. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma surrounded by cowherds, returned from the city to the camp of their carts.

24. All the auspicious blessings anticipated (to happen to the citizens of Mathura) by the Gopīs who became afflicted with the pangs of (impending) separation from Kṛṣṇa at the time of his departure (from Vraja), materialised to be true at Mathura, in the case of those citizens who could gaze at the splendour of the elegant personality of Kṛṣṇa (The Supreme Person), the ornament of Manliness to whom Śrī, the goddess

of beauty and affluence, resorted for shelter disregarding other gods who sought her.

25. After washing their pair of feet, they partook of rice boiled in milk. With full knowledge what Kaṁsa intended to do the next day, they spent that night quite happily.

26-27. Kaṁsa, however, was struck with panic when he heard the report of the breaking of the huge bow and the massacre of the guards of the bow and the contingent of the army (deployed against them), and the marvellous sportive acts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. The wicked-minded fellow, being terrified, remained sleepless for a long time, and saw both in sleep and while awake, many evil omens portending death.

28. Though his reflection in water or mirror was visible, he could not see his head in that reflection. Though no second luminary was in existence, he saw every planet (or lamp) in duplicate.

29. He espied holes in his shadow. Nor could he hear the whizzing sound of vital breath when the ears were closed. He felt that the trees he saw were of gold. Nor his footprints (in dust or sand) as he walked, were visible to him.

30. In dreams he saw himself clasped in embrace by dead persons (or goblins) and that he rode a donkey and gulped poison. He saw that he was wandering along with a garland of red flowers, and was smeared all over with oil and was naked.

31. He perceived such and other similar portends foreboding death, both in his dreams and in the waking state. Being terribly afraid of death, he did not get any sleep at all through anxiety.

32. When the night was over and the sun came up from the eastern waters, Kaṁsa caused (i.e. gave orders for) the grand celebration of athletic sports (such as wrestling of athletes etc.).

33. Men worshipped the wrestling arena. There was a fanfare of trumpets and beating of drums. The galleries were decorated with garlands, flags, buntings and ornamental arches.

34. Citizens and country people headed by Brāhmaṇas and Kṣattriyas entered and were comfortably seated, each

according to his position. Princes and royal personages also occupied their respective seats.

35. Surrounded by his ministers and at the centre of his tributary princes sat Kaṁsa on the throne, though his heart was aching with anxiety.

36. While the flourish of trumpets was being (occasionally drowned by the stroking of arms by athletes[1], the well adorned proud athletic champions occupied their seats alongwith their trainers.

37. Cāṇūra, Muṣṭika, Kūṭa, Śala and Tośala as well —all highly cheered up by the exciting music of the instruments presented themselves into the arena.

38. Cowherd Nanda and other cowherds who were invited by the king of Bhojas and who had offered their presents to him, took their seats on a separate dais.

## CHAPTER FORTYTHREE

*Killing of the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. The next morning, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma who had taken their bath and performed purificatory rites (as if to expiate the sin of killing their maternal uncle who, despite warnings of breaking the sacred bow, did not release their parents but wanted to kill them, heard the sound of the kettledrums and the shouting and beating of arms by wrestlers, went to see the tournaments, Oh repressor of enemies !

2. Arriving at the entrance of the arena, Kṛṣṇa beheld the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa stationed there under the direction of the controller of the elephant.

3. Preparing himself for action by tightening the cloth worn round the loins, and tying up tightly his curly locks of

1. *mallānāṁ tāla-śabda*
*sva-bāhu-mūlaghātaḥ—VT*

hair (with his upper garment) he spoke to the conductor of the elephant in a voice deep like thunder.

4. "You conductor of the elephant ! Make way for us. Hurry up. Clear out instantly. Else I shall send you along with your elephant to the region of Death."

5. Threatened thus, the driver of the elephant got enraged and goaded that already infuriated elephant looking like the god of Death at the end of the universe, to charge against Kṛṣṇa.

6. The big elephant vehemently dashed at Kṛṣṇa and seized him with his trunk. But slipping out of the coil of his trunk, Kṛṣṇa dealt him a blow and concealed himself betwixt his legs.

7. The enraged animal could not find Kṛṣṇa. Guided by his sense of smell, he reached his trunk to Keśava (Kṛṣṇa) who forcibly disengaged himself and rushed out of his grip.

8. Catching hold of the tail of that extremely mighty elephant, Kṛṣṇa easily dragged him to a distance of twenty-five bows (or one hundred cubit) even as Garuḍa would do to a cobra.

9. With his firm grip on his tail, he turned him to the contrary direction when he tried to turn to the right or to the left to catch hold of Kṛṣṇa, just as a boy would do to a calf to revolve it either this way or that.

10. Then he confronted the elephant at the very front and struck him down with his hand. He ran before the elephant with that much speed that he thought Kṛṣṇa to be in his grasp at every step and he made him tumble down.

11. While running sportively, Kṛṣṇa fell down on the ground, and promptly jumped aside. Thinking that Kṛṣṇa had fallen down (and lying there), the infuriated elephant struck the ground with his tusks (as Kṛṣṇa was not there).

12. Extremely enraged at the futility of his attack and being goaded on by the drivers, he dashed in rage towards Kṛṣṇa.

13. The glorious Lord, the slayer of demon Madhu, approached the attacking elephant, caught hold of his trunk and felled him on the ground.

14. Like a lion, Lord Kṛṣṇa pressed down the fallen elephant with his foot and extracting a tusk of that elephant killed him as well as his drivers.

15. Leaving the dead elephant there, Kṛṣṇa with one tusk in hand, entered the arena. With one tusk on his shoulder, with his body stained with drops of ichor and blood, Kṛṣṇa shone beautiful with his lotus-like face decked with pearl-like drops of perspiration'

16. Surrounded by several cowherds, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa armed with an excellent weapon in the form of the tusk of the elephant, entered the amphitheatre.

17.* When, accompanied with his elder brother, Kṛṣṇa entered the arena, he appeared like a thunderbolt to the athletes, as a superman to men, the god of Love (Cupid) incarnate to women, a kinsman to cowherds, a chastiser to wicked monarchs, a child to his parents, the veritable Death to Kaṁsa, the king of Bhojas, as a weakling or an inadequate competitor to the ignorant, the Highest Principle (*Brahman*) to the Yogins and the Supreme Deity to Vṛṣṇis.

18. Seeing that the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa was killed and both of them were still invincible, Kaṁsa with all his intrepidity and self-possession, felt extremely terrified at that time, Oh King.

19. The mighty-armed brothers with picturesque dress, strange ornaments, wreaths and wearing quaint garments, shone like two excellently attired brilliant actors on the stage and they captivated (and agitated the minds of the on-lookers with their brilliance.

* ŚR. explains that Lord Kṛṣṇa was a combination of different *rasas* (sentiments) according to the view point of the person concerned. He quotes a verse enumerating the order of *rasas*. He manifested :

*raudro'dbhutaśca śṛṅgāro hāsyaṁ vīro dayā tathā|*
*bhayānakaś ca bībhatsaḥ śāntaḥ saprema-bhaktikaḥ||*

VT. and VB. also in a lengthy commentary expound how Lord Kṛṣṇa represented all the *rasas*. For example : the ordinary citizens were so much surprised to see the Supra-human exploits of Kṛṣṇa (e.g. killing a big elephant singlehandedly without the use of weapons by his physical might) that it was a miracle to them (*adbhuta*)

20. The occupants of the galleries, both from the town and the country gazed at those two super-men. With their eyes and countenances beaming with an outburst of extreme joy, they as if drank the countenances of those brothers with their eyes but did not feel satisfied, Oh King.

21. They were as if drinking them with their eyes, licking them with their tongues, smelling them with their nose and clasping them in their arms.

22. They described to each other the details of what they actually saw (e.g. breaking of the sacrificial bow) and of what they heard (e.g. lifting of mount Govardhana) as if they were recollecting their personality (armed with the tusks of the elephant), excellences (such as bravery), sweetness (of smiling, manner of speaking etc.) and their extraordinary courage.

23. "These two brothers are the incarnations of the rays of the Almighty Lord Hari whose abode is cosmic waters, descended on the earth in the house of Vasudeva.

24. It is reported that this Kṛṣṇa was born of Devakī and taken to Gokula where, without being known by anyone, he grew up in the house of Nanda till that time.

25. By him Pūtanā, the demon in the form of a whirl-wind (Cakravāta), the two Arjuna trees, the Yakṣa (Śaṅkhacūḍa), Keśin, Dhenuka[1] and others of the same tribe were finished.

26. Cows along with cowherds were rescued by him from the forest-conflagration, the serpent Kāliya was subdued and Indra was humbled down with his pride ridden off.

27. The big mountain (Govardhana) was held up by him on his palm for seven days and Gokula was protected from (driving) showers, (tempestuous) winds and thunderbolts.

28. Looking with delight at his ever-cheerful appearance beaming with smiles, the Gopīs easily[2] got over their sufferings of various sorts.

29. People say that being protected by him in every respect, the race of Yadu became widely celebrated and will attain affluence, glory and influence.

1. It may be noted that Dhenuka was killed by Balarāma (vide 10.15.36) But people in Mathura heard a different report.

2. ŚR. alternately takes *śramam* as qualifying *mukham* and interprets: the slightly 'fatigued countenance of Kṛṣṇa.'

30. This is his elder brother the splendid-looking Balarāma of lotus-eyes, by whom were killed Pralamba, Vatsaka (the demon who assumed the form of a calf) and Asuras like Baka and others[1]"

31. While people were talking thus (among themselves) and there was a flourish of trumpets, Cāṇūra addressed Kṛṣṇa and Rāma, and spoke as follows :

32. "Oh Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda ! Oh Balarāma ! Hearing that both of you are respected as great heroes, expert in wrestling, you have been invited by the king who is eager to see you.

33. Subjects who abide by the wish of the king in thought, word and deeds, attain to prosperity. And if they behave to the contrary, they meet with the reverse of it.

34. It is quite well known that since the age as cowherd-boys who tend calves, even grown up cowherds also take delight in sporting and wrestling in the jungle while pasturing the cows.

35. Hence, let all of us do what is liked by the king. All beings will be propitious unto us thereby, as the king personifies all beings."

36. Hearing that speech, Kṛṣṇa welcomed it. Considering that wrestling was desirable in his case[2], he gave a reply appropriate to the place and occasion.

37. "(Though we are not city-dwellers like you under Kaṁsa's direct control) we too, wanderers in the forest as we are, are the subjects of the king of Bhojas we shall always do what is agreeable to him. It will be a great favour unto us.

38. We are after all boys. We shall play with those who are equal to us in strength. Let there be proper type of wrestling. There should not be the slightest transgression of justice, Oh judges of the wrestling tournaments."

1. As it usually happens in hearsay information, people of Mathura seem to have mixed up matters, for Vatsa and Baka were killed by Kṛṣṇa.

2. VB. explains that the investiture of the sacred thread of Kṛṣṇa had not taken place. As such, though he was a Kṣattriya, he was ineligible to use arms. Hence (for killing them) wrestling was appropriate from the point of time and place or traditional usage.

*Cāṇūra replied* :

39. "Neither You nor Balarāma is a child nor a teen-ager (from eleven to fifteen years of age). You, by whom an elephant possessing the strength of a thousand elephants was killed as if in a sport, are the foremost amongs the powerful people.

40. Hence, Oh Kṛṣṇa (A scion of the Vṛṣṇi clan) You will have to wrestle with powerful athletes. There is no injustice in this case. You measure Your strength with me and let Balarāma wrestle with Muṣṭika."

## CHAPTER FORTYFOUR

*Slaying of Kaṁsa*

*Śrī Śuka continued* :

1. (When the pairs (or wrestlers) were so determined) Lord Kṛṣṇa (the slayer of demon Madhu) of unflinching resolution caught hold of Cāṇūra and Balarāma, the son of Rohiṇī advanced towards Muṣṭika.

1-A* (Spurious—vide the foot-note)

2. With the ambition of vanquishing the opponent, they interlocked their hands and feet with those of the opponent and vehemently tugged each other (with all their strength).

3. While wrestling they struck each other with fore-arms with clenched fists[1], knees with knees, heads with heads and chests with chests.

*. D.S. Yande's edition of the Bh.P. Bombay 1928 adds this spurious verse. As Vṛndāvana edt. does not give it, I did not include it above :

*āsphoṭya hastau hastābhyām ūrū caiva punaḥ punaḥ /*
*visṛjya bhūyaḥ saṅgṛhya parikramya parasparam //*

It describes how the wrestlers stroked loudly their arms and thighs, closed upon each other and tried to dodge.

I regard it as 'spurious' as some standard annotators such as ŚR., VR., VJ., VB., VT. do not take its cognisance.

1. *tasmān muṣṭyupa-lakṣitatvena kathañcit muṣṭir eva vācyā*—VT

4. They mutually tried to overpower each other by whirling, squeezing into arms, dashing each other to the ground and by pouncing on each other or dodging by receding.

5. Fired with the ambition to vanquish the other, they subjected each other's bodies to sufferings by lifting up, by carrying away, dashing down on the ground and fixing the opponent to the spot.

6. Noticing that unequally-arranged fight between the weak boys and the powerful athletes, all the lady-spectators, being full of compassion, spoke (criticising) in groups, to each other, Oh king !

7. "Alas ! It is out and out injustice on the part of the royal assembly who revel in such unequal fighting between the weak and the strong opponents, despite the presence of the king as spectator.

8. What a great contrast is there between the athletes of adamant-like powerful bodies, enormous like the hills, as opposed to the two saplings (teenagers) of very delicate limbs and who have not even attained youth.

9. This is certainly the transgression of righteousness on the part of this assembly. One should never stay at all at a place where violation of religion and justice takes place.

10. An intelligent person who is aware of the faults of the members of attending an assembly, ought not to enter that assembly at all. Irrespective of his participation in the discussion of the assembly by remaining silent despite knowing the truth or making a non-factual statement), the attending member incurs sins.

11. Lo ! Have a look at the lotus-face of Kṛṣṇa. How his countenance appears adorned with droplets of perspiration and resembles a lotus covered with drops of water, as he whirls round his opponent.

12. Don't you see the face of Balarāma, with reddish eyes, flushed with rage against Muṣṭika, yet beautified with a defiant laugh.

13. Oh ! How blessed must be the lands of Vraja where this Ancient Person whose feet are worshipped by god Śiva and goddess Lakṣmī roams about in the guise of a human being, decorated with wreaths of quaint wild flowers, playing upon

his flute, tending cows in the company of Balarāma and goes out for playing games (Shame upon this assembly where he is maltreated thus).

14. What supreme type of penance the Gopīs must have practised that they drink with their eyes his personal charm which is the essence of beauty, neither equalled nor surpassed by anything, which is by itself too beautiful to be adorned by anything external which assumed novelty every moment and is very difficult to obtain, as it is the permanent absolute abode of glory, beauty, affluence and almightiness.

15. Blessed are the women of Vraja who, in the course of their every day activities like milking the kine, pounding corns etc. churning curds for butter, applying cow-dung to the ground, rocking the cradles, lullabying their babies, cleaning and sweeping the houses, glorify him in songs with their hearts deeply attached to him, with their throat choked with tears and who get whatever they wish with their minds absorbed in Lord Kṛṣṇa[1] (*or* who carry on all their activities while contemplating on Lord Kṛṣṇa).

16. Inexhaustible must be the fund of merits of those women of Vraja who, coming out on the street quickly on hearing him playing upon the flute, while going out of the Vraja in the morning and returning to Vraja in the evening along with the (herd of) cows, are able to behold his countenance beaming with smiles and radiating grace and compassion.

17. While the women folk were loudly discussing among themselves, the glorious Lord Hari, the Master of Yoga made up his mind to finish with the enemy, Oh Leader of Bharatas !

18.* Hearing the panicky discussion of women (full of apprehension), the parents (Vasudeva and Devakī) who were not aware of the (extraordinary) strength of their children, were overwhelmed with filial love and were agitated at heart (full of repentance for not instructing Akrūra not to bring children to Mathura).

1. *ŚR. urukramacittaṁ tenaiva yānaṁ sarva-viṣaya-prāptir yāsāṁ tāḥ /*
*. untraced in the text of VJ.

19. Acyuta (Kṛṣṇa) and Cāṇūra fought with each other using diverse manouvers in wrestling. In the same manner did Balarāma wrestle with Muṣṭika.

20. It is reported that at every blow and stroke from the Lord's limbs (such as fisted fore-arms and knees) which were hard like strokes of Vajra (Indra's thunderbolt), the limbs of Cāṇūra got shattered and he fainted now and then.

21. With the swiftness of a hawk, the enraged Cāṇūra jumped up and clenching both hands into fists, struck the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa (the son of Vasudeva) on the chest.

22-23. The Lord however did not budge an inch under that blow like an elephant when struck with a wreath of flowers), (on the contrary) catching hold of Cāṇūra by both his arms, he whirled Cāṇūra several times so violently as extinguished his life thereby and dashed him on the ground, where he lay stretched with ornaments and garlands scattered and hair dishevelled, like the flagstaff of Indra struck down.

24. Similarly Muṣṭika was violently slapped with his palms by Balarāma who was dealt a blow with his fist by Muṣṭika.

25. Trembling violently (in a swoon) and pressed hard (from within), he vomitted blood profusely through his mouth and fell down dead on the ground, like a tree uprooted by a stormy wind.

26. After this, Balarāma, the past master in boxing (lit. in dealing blows) sportively yet scornfully dealt a blow with his left fist and killed another demon Kūṭa who advanced to fight.

27. At the same time, Śala (who approached Kṛṣṇa to pull his leg) got his head knocked off by Kṛṣṇa's kick and the head of Tosalaka (who attempted the same simultaneously) had his head split in two (by Kṛṣṇa's kick) and both of them fell down lifeless on the ground.

28. When Cāṇūra, Muṣṭika, Kūṭa, Śala and Tośalaka were thus killed, the rest of the wrestlers, being anxious to save their own lives, ran away.[1]

1. Out of the various commentaries describing this wrestling, it appears that VB had a better idea of that art.

29. Then Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa dragged forth their cowherd-friends in the arena. And clasping them they sported. While the trumpets were flourishing, their anklets too jingled as (Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma) capered and danced.

30. With the exception of Kaṁsa, all spectators were overjoyed at the (athletic) feats of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa. And all good people including prominent Brāhmaṇas cheered them up with the shouts "Bravo ! Well-done !".

31. It is traditionally reported that when the stalwart wrestlers, were killed and the rest took to their heals, Kaṁsa, the king of Bhojas, stopped the blowing of all trumpets and commanded as follows :

32. "Drive out from the city (Mathura) the two ill-behaved sons of Vasudeva. Confiscate the wealth of all Gopas (cowherds). Arrest and bind down the wicked-minded Nanda.

33. As to the evil-minded Vasudeva, the vilest of the vile, let him be put to death immediately along with father Ugrasena and his attendants who have sided with the hostile party."

34. While Kaṁsa was thus boastfully ordering, the indefatigable Lord Kṛṣṇa flared up in rage and with vehemence he sprang forth with agility to the high dias (occupied by Kaṁsa).

35. Perceiving Kṛṣṇa so approaching him as his veritable Death, the heroic Kaṁsa instantly sprang from his seat and grasped his sword and shield.

36. Like Garuḍa forcibly seizing a serpent, the formidable Lord of irresistible and terrible energy, instantaneously caught hold of Kaṁsa firmly, as he was moving about right and left, like a hawk in the sky.

37. Toppling down his crown and catching Kaṁsa by his hair, the Lord hurled him down from the high dias to the groundfloor of the arena. And on him jumped the absolute willed, (the weighty) support of the (heaviest of the heavy) universe, the veritable Lord Viṣṇu (the lotus-navelled God) himself.

*Vj.'s text adds*

37A. When Kaṁsa was thus thrown down and crushed by Kṛṣṇa, (the mightily heavy) abode of the three worlds and

of absolute will power, Kaṁsa gave up his life in a second (the winking of the eyelid), Oh King.

38. And like unto a lion dragging an elephant, Lord Hari dragged him on the ground though lifeless, even while the world was witnessing it (aghast). Loud shrieks, screams and shouts expressing grief and horror burst forth from all the people, Oh King.

39. With a mind agitated with fright, he always visualized in front of him the Lord armed with a discus even while he was drinking, speaking, wandering, sleeping (nay even) breathing. Hence after death, he attained (identity with) that very form which is so very difficult (for others) to attain.

40. Kaṅka, Nyagrodhaka, and other eight younger brothers of Kaṁsa became enraged and attacked him with a view to repay the moral debt of their brother by avenging his death.

41. With the tusk of the elephant as a club (*parigha*) Balarāma, the son of Rohiṇī, struck down and finished all those who rushed fully prepared and with vehement impetuosity, as a lion kills beasts.

42. Kettle-drums were sounded in the heavens. Great divinities like Brahmā, Śiva and others were highly delighted and sang songs of glory, while showering flowers on him. And celestial women danced.

43. The widowed women, however, who were deeply grieved at the death of their husbands and friends came there beating their heads and eyes overflowing with tears, Oh great king.

44. Embracing their husbands lying dead on the ground the grieving ladies lamented loudly, shedding frequently profuse tears.

45. (They bewailed: "Ah! My Lord! My beloved, knower of *dharma*! Oh merciful Lord! Oh affectionate darling! By your death we, along with your home and progeny are as good as killed.

46. Oh foremost among men! Bereaved of you the protector, the city of Mathura does not appear beautiful as it is bereft of joyousness, festivals and auspiciousness.

47. Oh Lord !You perpetrated utmost cruelty and harshness towards the innocents. Hence, you have been brought to such a plight. What oppressors of living beings can get happiness ?

48. For, this Kṛṣṇa is verily the beginning (creator), end (destroyer) and the protector of all beings. He who is insubordinate to him shall never get any happiness."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

49. Having consoled the ladies of the royal family, the glorious Lord who is the protector of the world, caused what is known as the formal obsequies and funeral rites of those who were killed.

50. Thereupon, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma secured the release of their father and mother from their chains and touching their feet with their heads, paid respects to them.

51. Realizing that their sons who were bowing down are verily the Lords of the world, Devakī and Vasudeva being afraid (of a possible offence to them) did not embrace them.

## CHAPTER FORTYFIVE

*Restoration of Preceptor Sāndīpani's son*

*Śrī Śuka continued*:

1. Noticing that his parents, Vasudeva and Devakī, had realized the truth (of their Divine Nature) prematurely (before enjoying the filial bliss in loving them as their children), the Supreme Person, Kṛṣṇa, cast over them his divine Māyā (the spell of his deluding faculty) which infatuates the world, so that this realization (of his God-hood) should not continue (as it would not give scope to their parental love and affect their affectionate filial behaviour).

2. Kṛṣṇa, the bull (prominent person) among the Sātvatas, approached along with his elder brother to his parents.

He bowed down with great modesty, and respectfully addressed them: "Oh Mother" and "Oh father."

3. "Father ! Though both of you have been all along longing earnestly for it, we could not, at any time, give you the pleasure of witnessing the infancy, childhood and boyhood of your sons.

4. Unfortunate as we are, we had not the good luck of staying near you nor could we enjoy the bliss of being caressed by parents which children dwelling in their parent's home experience.

5. It is not possible for a mortal being, even within the full span of human life of hundred years, to repay the obligations of parents who brought forth and nourished his body whereby all the four objects in life (like *dharma*, *artha* etc.) are achieved.

6. If he (the son) be (physically and financially) competent but does not maintain them by rendering personal service or financial help, he is made to eat his own flesh (in hell) after his death, by servants of Yama.

7. He who, in spite of his competence (to support) his old mother, father, chaste wife and infant son, his preceptor, (learned) Brāhmaṇa and one seeking his resort, is as good as dead though breathing.

8. With our minds ever in terror of Kaṁsa and due to our inability to worship you both, all these days have been sheerly wasted away.

9. It behoves you, Oh father and mother, to forgive us, since we were dependants and unable to render service to you, even though you were mercilessly harassed by that wicked-hearted fellow Kaṁsa."

*Śrī Śuka said*:

10. Fascinated by the charming words of Lord Hari who, though the soul of the universe, had assumed a human form through his Māyā Potency, they placed him on their lap, embraced him and felt greatly delighted.

11. Oh King ! Bound with ties of (filial) affection, they bathed him profusely with their tears. Being bewildered and

with their throats choked with tears and emotions, they could utter nothing.

12. Having thus comforted his parents, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, (immediately) installed his maternal grandfather as the king of Yadus.

13. He addressed him (Ugrasena): "Oh great king! May Your Majesty be pleased to command us (Yadus) as well as the subjects (of the Śūrasena country). Owing to an imprecation from Yayāti, Yadus are not entitled to occupy a throne.[1]

14. When I attend upon you as your servant, even gods (and other supernatural beings) will submissively offer worship to you. What then to speak of other chiefs of human beings? They will definitely do so.

15-16. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Creator of the Universe, brought back his kith and kin—Yadus, Vṛṣṇis, Andhakas, Dāśārhas, Kukuras and others, who being overcome with the fear from Kaṁsa, had fled to different directions and had undergone suffering in foreign lands. He consoled them, providing them with sufficient wealth and wherewithals and rehabilitated them in their homes.

17. Protected by the arms of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and with all their agonies removed by Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, they enjoyed themselves in their homes with all their desire accomplished.

18. (Having the opportunity of) seeing daily the lotus-like countenance of Kṛṣṇa graced with splendour and beauty and beaming with smiles and compassionate looks, all of them were delighted.

19. Even aged persons thereof, who could drink with their eyes the nectarine beauty of his lotus-face, became rejuvenated with abundant strength and energy.

1. Despite Yadu's refusal to transfer his youth to his father for enjoying his mother (a serious moral problem), Yadu was given the southern part of his kingdom by his father (*vide Supra* 9.19.22). ŚR. explains: 'Though you belong to the Yadu clan, you will not incur any sin as you occupy the throne by my command.'

20. Thereupon, the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Son of Devakī, and Balarāma approached Nanda, and embracing him, spoke to him as follows, Oh King of kings.

21. "Father ! Both of us have been extremely fondled and nourished by you both (Nanda and Yaśodā) who have been highly affectionate to us. Parents cherish more love towards their children than to their own selves.

22. He is the real father and she is the (*de facto*) mother who nourish and caress like their own sons, other babes who are abandoned by their relatives, due to their incapacity to feed and protect them.

23. Father ! Now all of you return to your Vraja. After looking to the welfare and felicity of friends hereof, we shall come to visit you, our kith and kin who due to our separation from them are grieved through their love for us."

24. Having consoled Nanda along with the residents of Vraja in this way, the glorious Immutable Lord (Kṛṣṇa) respectfully worshipped them with garments, ornaments, utensils (of copper, brass etc. as milk-containers) and other gifts.

25. Nanda who was addressed thus (by Kṛṣṇa) was overwhelmed with filial love. With his eyes streaming with tears, he hugged them both and returned to Vraja along with Gopas.

26. Thereafter, Vasudeva, the son of Śūra caused as per *Śāstric* prescriptions, the ceremony of the investiture of the sacred thread[1] (essential for the status of the 'twice-borns') (of their sons) by his family priest Garga and other Brāhmaṇas.

27. After adorning the Brāhmaṇas with ornaments, he worshipped them and gave as *dakṣiṇā* (fee for performing this ceremony) cows with their calves, decorated with gold chains and other ornaments and covered with silk-cloth.

28. The noble-minded Vasudeva recollected the cows which he donated mentally, according to the constellation that was in ascendance at the time of the birth of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa but (which he could not give, as they) were seized ille-

1. As the presence of mother is essential in the sacred thread ceremony, it is obvious that Balarāma's mother, Rohiṇī was brought from Vraja—VT.

gally and unrighteously by Kaṁsa. And he gave those cows also (which he intended to give).

29. Thereupon, being consecrated (through the investiture of the sacred thread) and attaining the status of the 'twice-borns', those two staunch observers of vows adopted the vow of celibacy (lit. vow pertaining to the *Gāyatri mantra*) from the sage Garga, the family priest of Yadus.

30. Though both of them were the source of all lores, and the omniscient Lords of the worlds, they concealed their unclouded spiritual knowledge which is in-born and not borrowed from others, by behaving like common men.

31. Desirous of having a residence in a preceptor's house for their education, they approached (and served Sāndīpani who was originally a resident of Kāśī[1] but was now a citizen of Avantī.

32. The self-controlled brothers formally approached him with due humility and respect, and set a model of faultless behaviour with the teacher, (for others to emulate). Both of them who were respectfully treated, served their teacher with devotion, as if he were a god.

33. Being highly pleased with their pure-hearted devoted services, the eminent Brāhmaṇa teacher, Sāndīpani taught them all the Vedas along with their *Upaniṣads* (the philosophical works) and the accessory branches (viz. *Śikṣā*—phonetics, *chandas*—prosody, *Vyākaraṇa*—grammar, *Jyotiṣa*—Astronomy, *Kalpa*—science of Vedic ritualism and *Nirukta*—etymology).

34. He taught them Military science (lit. the Veda pertaining to archery) along with the mystic formulae (*mantras*) of discharging and retracting *astras* (missiles), *dharma-śāstra* (Law incorporated into the codes of Manu etc.), *Mimāṁsā*, Logic and political science along with its six branches[2] (viz. techniques regarding peace-treaties, warfare, expedition, encampment, spreading sedition and dis-array among enemies and consolidation of alliance).

1. *Kāśyam*—belonging to Kāśyapa *gotra*.
2. ŚR. and VJ. quote the following verse enumerating these branches-
*Sandhiṁ ca vigrahaṁ caiva yānam āsanam eva ca/*
*dvaidhī-bhāvaṁ saṁśrayaṁ ca ṣaḍ-guṇāḥ kavayo viduḥ //*

35. Those two greatest among the great, who were themselves the progenitors of all lores mastered everything that the teachers uttered but once to them (while teaching), Oh protector of men !

36. Within a period of sixtyfour days and nights, those brothers, with controlled minds, mastered as many (i.e. sixty-four[1]) arts and crafts, and persuaded their preceptor to accept whatever he liked as his fee of teaching.

1. ŚR. quotes a work *Śaiva tantra* enumerating the traditional sixty four *kalās*. Ardhamāgadhī Jaina canon enumerates 72 *kalās*. The resemblance between the two lists is significant from the point of social life in ancient India. Here the list of sixtyfour *kalās* as quoted by ŚR. and explained by VT is given.

1. *Gīta* (singing) 2. *Vādya* (instrumental music) 3. *Nṛtya* (dancing) 4. *Nāṭya* (histrionics) 5. *Ālekhya* (painting, and drawing) 6. *Viśeṣakacchedya* (painting various designs on the body) 7. *Taṇḍula-kusuma-bali-vikāra* (preparations of various designs with rice, flowers etc. in worship) 8. *Puṣpāstaraṇa* (preparing a bed of flowers 9. *Daśana-vasanā-aṅgarāga* (painting the teeth, limbs of the body and articles of dress with various figures). 10. *Maṇi-bhūmikā-karma* (paving of the floor with precious stones.) 11. *Śayana-racanā* (preparation of bed) 12. *Udaka-vādya* (*Jala-taraṅga* : a musical instrument with water pots), *Udaka ghāta* (steadying water enabling one to walk over it) 13. *Citra-yoga* (demonstration of miracles). 14. *Mālya-grathana-vikalpa* (preparation of wreaths and chaplets of flowers). 15. *Śekharāpīḍa-yojana* (preparation of ornaments of flowers for the ears etc.) 16. *Nepathya-yoga* (method of beautifying the body with clothes etc.). 17 *Karṇa-patra-bhaṅga* (drawing ornamental figures on the ears). 18. *Sugandha-yukti* (making of cosmetics and perfumes) 19. *Bhūṣaṇa-yojana* (making ornaments of different kinds). 20. *Aindra-jāla* (Jugglery). 21. *Kaucumāra-yoga* (assuming various disguises) 22. *Hasta-lāghava* (sleight of hand) 23. *Citra-śākāpūpa-bhakṣya-vikāra-kriyā* (preparation of various sweet dishes). 24. *Pānakarasarāgāsava-yojana* (preparation of drinks of various tastes and colours). 25. *Sūcīvāya-karma* (needle work and embroidery). 26. *Sūtra-krīḍā* (Puppet-show by string-pulling), 27. *Vīṇā-ḍamaruka-vādya* (making musical instruments), 28. *Prahelikā* (solving conundrums—like cross-word puzzles); 29. *Pratimālā* (making replicas of things—) 30. *durvācaka-yoga* (uttering tongue-twisters), 31. *Pustaka vācanam* (fast reading of books (Mss) despite *lacunae*), 32. *Nāṭakākhyāyikā-darśanam* (Dramaturgy and writing plays or dramas), 33. *Kāvya-samasyā-pūraṇam* (completion of a verse from a part—generally containing an apparently illogical statement) to make a cogent statement out of it) 34. *Paṭṭikā-vetra-bāṇa-vikalpa* (Preparation of ligatures, canework, arrows), 35. *tarka-karma* (spindle work), 36. *takṣaṇam* (carpentry), 37. *Vāstuvidyā* (architecture), 38. *rūpya-ratna-parīkṣā* (evaluation and testing of valuable metals (silver, gold) precious stones), 39. *dhātuvāda* (Alchemy), 40. *maṇi-rāga-*

37. Noticing their miraculous capacity and greatness and their super human intelligence, the Brāhmaṇa, after consultation with his wife, sought (the restoration to life of) his son who died in the ocean at Prabhāsa (paṭṭaṇa in Saurāṣṭra), as his fee.

38. Complying with his request with the word, "So be it", those two great heroes (who could single-handedly fight with ten thousand warriors) and were of unlimited prowess, then mounted their chariot, arrived at Prabhāsa and going to the beach thereof, sat there for a moment. Having come to know of the arrival of those divine personages, the god presiding over the ocean, worshipped them with valuable presents.

39. The glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke to him: "Let the son of my preceptor who was swallowed up by you in a big wave, be restored immediately."

*The Presiding Deity of the sea replied*:

40-41. "Oh refulgent Lord Kṛṣṇa ! I have never carried away that son of your preceptor. But there is a formidable demon called Pañcajana who moves through the waters. He is an asura who has assumed the form of a conch As a matter

*jñāna* (developing colours in precious stones), 41. *ākara-jñāna* (mining and mineralogy), 42. *Vṛkṣāyurveda* (botany), 43. *meṣa-kukuṭa-lāvaka-yuddha-vidhi* (arranging ram-fights, cock-fights), 44. *Śuka-sārikā-pralapana* (teaching parrots, etc. to imitate human speech), 45. *utsādanam* (Driving out an enemy—by a *mantra*), 46. *Keśamārjana-Kauśala* (hair-dressing and cleaning), 47. *akṣara-muṣṭikā-kathana*(reading closed letters and divining what is hidden in fists), 48. *mlecchita-kutarka-vikalpa* (reading books in foreign or barbaric-scripts), 49. *deśa-bhāṣājñāna* (knowledge of languages of the country i.e. Indian languages), 50. *Puṣṭa-śakaṭikā-nirmiti-jñāna* (knowledge of making a cart blossom), 51. *yantra-mātṛkā-dhāraṇa-mātṛkā* (magical formulae—with figures inscribed with letters and amulets to wear), 52. *sampāṭyam* (breaking hard substances like diamonds in different shapes), 53. *mānasī-kāvya-krīyā* (mind-reading in verse form), 44. *abhidhāna-kośa* (Lexicography), 55. *chandojñana* (knowledge of prosody), 56. *Kriyāvikalpa* (multiplying the number of objects by various devices), 57. *chalitaka-yoga* (playing tricks), 58. *Vastra-gopana* (showing one's clothes as more superfine), 59. *dyūta viśeṣa* (expertise in gambling), 60. *ākarṣa-krīḍā* (attracting remote objects= telekinesis). 61. *Bālakrīḍanaka* (playing children's games), 62. *Vaināyikī* (jugglery and practice kriyā dharmas), 63. *Vaijayikī* (foreknowledge of victory in debate), 64. *Vaitālikriyā* (control of goblins and evil spirits).

of fact, the boy has been carried away by him." Hearing that, the glorious Lord instantly plunged into the water, killed the demon (Pañcajana) but could not trace the child in his bowels.

42-44. Taking the conch which formed his body, he returned to his chariot. He went with Balarāma to Saṁyamanī, the beloved city of Yama, the god of death and blew his conch. Hearing the loud blast of the conch, Yama, the chastiser of all beings, offered them worship on a grand scale and with deep devotion. Bowing down in humility, he submitted to Kṛṣṇa who abides in the hearts of all beings, "Oh Viṣṇu who have assumed a human form out of sport ! What can I do for you both ?"

*The glorious Lord replied*:

45. Oh great Ruler ! Even if the son of my preceptor is brought here due to the force of his *Karma*, bring him here in obedience to and under the sanction of my command.

46. The preceptor's son who, in compliance of his command, was brought back by the god of Death, was restored to their preceptor by those two eminent Yadus who requested him, "Be pleased to ask for any other boon."

*The Preceptor (Sāndipani) said*:

47. Child Kṛṣṇa ! The obligations of the preceptors have been richly and properly repaid by you both respectable pupils. What desire of your preceptor can remain unfulfilled ?

48. Oh heroes ! You return to your homes ! May your glory be purifying to the world ! May your memory and knowledge of the Vedas remain afresh here and hereafter.

49. Oh child parīkṣit ! Being thus permitted to return home, both of them returned to their capital in their chariot which had the speed of the wind and the thundering of the cloud.

50. All the subjects who missed Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa for many days, were highly rejoiced to see them both, like persons who have recovered their lost wealth.

## CHAPTER FORTYSIX

*Uddhava deputed for consoling Nanda*

*Śrī Śuka said*:

1. Uddhava was the foremost counsellor of the Vṛṣṇis and the utmost beloved friend of Kṛṣṇa. He was a direct disciple of Bṛhaspati (the preceptor of gods and a founder of the political science) and was most intelligent.

2. On one occasion, holding Uddhava's hand in his own, Lord Hari, the destroyer of miseries of those who seek asylum in him, spoke to him—his most beloved votary of unflinching devotion.

3. "Oh gentle-natured Uddhava! Please do go to Vraja. Bring felicity to our[1] parents (Nanda and Yaśodā) by communicating my message to them. Please relieve the (mental) agony of separation from me of the Gopīs by conveying my special message to them.

4. They have entirely devoted their heart and soul to me and they regard me as their very life. For my sake they have given up their husbands and sons—nay their bodily requirements[2] as well.

4A. They are united with me in mind regarding me as their beloved-most, the climax of their love and their Lord.

I always support and give happiness to those who renounce all pleasures and interests and means to obtain them here and hereafter, and have over-ruled popular moral conventions for my sake.

5. Myelf, the foremost of their beloved objects, being away at a distant place, the women of Gokula always brood over me and being overwhelmed with deep anxiety and grief caused by separation from me, they have become oblivious to everything else, dear friend!

6. It is due to my message assuring them of my return to visit them that the cowherd women whose heart and soul is

1. *v.l. nau*—of us both—VB.

2. 4-A. Some editions (e.g. Yande's Bombay edition) add this line here :

*māmeva dayitaṁ preṣṭham ātmānam manasā gatāḥ /*

absorbed in me are somehow managing to stay alive with great difficulty".

*Śri Śuka said* :

7. Oh king ! When thus instructed, Uddhava received with respect and devotion the message of his Lord. Getting into his chariot, he drove fast to Nanda's Gokula.

8. While the sun was setting and his chariot was obscured with the thick cloud of dust raised by the hoofs of the cattle that were returning home, the blessed Uddhava reached Nanda's Vraja (and could contact Nanda without Gopīs being aware of his arrival).

9. It (the Gokula) was noisy to the roaring of maddened bulls (in rut) fighting with one another for cows in heat, and by rushing of cows with heavy udders to meet their calves.

10. It appeared beautiful with snow-white calves (briskly) frisking and capering here and there and with the musical notes of flutes and (whistle-like) sounds while milking the cows.

11. The Gokula appeared most resplendent with richly adorned Gopīs and Gopas, the former glorifying in songs the auspicious deeds of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa.

12. It was charming with the habitations of the cowherds where the sacred fire, the sun-God, guests, cows, Brāhmaṇas, ancestors and gods were being worshipped with flowers, lights and fragrant frank-incense burnt before them (*OR* and which were beautified by garlands, lamps and burning frankincense).

13. On all sides, it abounded in groves in full blossom and resounded with the sweet warblings and notes of birds and hummings of bees. It was beautified with ponds full of lotus-beds teeming with swans and Kāraṇḍavas (a species of ducks).

14. Seeing (and receiving) Uddhava, the beloved follower of kṛṣṇa, who had arrived there, Nanda was exceedingly delighted. He embraced him and worshipped him (with due formalities and respect) regarding him to be Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa) himself.

15. When he was served with rich dishes and was comfortably resting on a bed, and had been relieved of his fatigue by shampooing and such other services, Nanda enquired of him.

16. "Oh Highly blessed dear Uddhava ! Is our friend Vasudeva, the delight (or son) of Śūra happy and doing well, as he is now free (from imprisonment) united with his sons, wives and others and is surrounded by his friends and well-wishers ?

17. The wicked Kaṁsa who always hated the righteous and religious-minded Yadus, has fortunately been killed by his own sins along with his followers.

18. Does Kṛṣṇa remember us, his mother Yaśodā, his friends, well-wishers and other Gopas, Vraja of which he was the protector, cows, Vṛndāvana and mount Govardhana !

19. Will Kṛṣṇa, the Protector of cows, come at least once, to see his friends, kith and kin (hereof) ? Then alone we shall be able to see his charming countenance with a shapely nose, happy smiles and (loving) glances.

20. We have been protected from the forest conflagration, stormy winds and driving showers, the demon in the bullock form (Ariṣṭa), the serpent (Kāliya) and from perils and fatal accidents which were difficult to be avoided, by the highly noble-souled Kṛṣṇa.

21. Dear Uddhava ! When we remember the heroic exploits of Kṛṣṇa, his sportive glances, his smiles and talks, all our actions become slackened.

22. Even as we see the play-grounds, the river Yamunā, hills, forests and groves adorned with the foot-prints of Kṛṣṇa, our mind becomes absorbed in him.

23. As observed by Garga, I too regard that Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa are the most prominent divinities who have descended on this earth for accomplishing some important mission of gods.

24. Both of them easily killed, as in a sport, Kaṁsa who possessed the strength of ten thousand elephants, the two wrestlers (Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika) and the king of elephants. Kuvalayāpīḍa.

25. Like a king of elephants breaking down a sugarcane, Kṛṣṇa snapped the formidable bow three *tālas* (i.e. twentyseven spans) in length. And on one hand, he held up the mount Govardhana for a period of seven days.

26. By him were killed as in a sport demons like Pralamba, Dhenuka, Ariṣṭa, Tṛṇāvarta, Baka and others who have vanquished gods and *asuras*."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

27. Recollecting graphically again and again the sports and exploits of Kṛṣṇa, Nanda whose mind and intellect were deeply attached to Kṛṣṇa lapsed into silence, as he was overwhelmed with extreme longing and (felt choked up) with a flood of affection.

28. While Yaśodā was listening to the description of the exploits of her sons, she shed tears profusely and her breasts overflowed with milk through maternal affection.

29. Noticing such a supreme affection of Nanda and Yaśodā towards Lord Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava spoke with great joy to Nanda.

*Uddhava said* :

30. "Oh courteous bestower of honours![1] Both of you are indeed the most praiseworthy among embodied beings in this world, inasmuch as you cherish such a deep love for Nārāyaṇa (Kṛṣṇa) who is the Creator of all beings.

31. For these two—Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa—are the primary (efficient and material) cause of the Universe ; they are the *Puruṣa* (spirit) and *Pradhāna* (Primordial matter). Permeating all beings, these two Ancient(beginningless) Lords control varieties of consciousness.

32. If at the time of death, a person concentrates his mind in him at least for a moment, he reduces to ashes all his (accumulated) *karmas* and (realizing the nature of his self) becomes identical with Brahman, (and attaining a form constituted of pure *sattva*) acquires the refulgence of the Sun, and instantly reaches the highest goal.

1. You gave us the honour of belonging to the fraternity of devotees of the Lord from Nārada down to a resident of Gokula—VT.

33. Both of you cherish utmost devotion unto him (Kṛṣṇa) who is the veritable Lord Nārāyaṇa himself, the cause (source) of all beings, and who has assumed a human form for some divine purpose. Oh noble-souled Nanda ! What meritorious acts are yet to be achieved by you both !

34. At no distant date, the immutable Lord Kṛṣṇa will visit Vraja again. The glorious of the Sātvatas will accomplish whatever delights his parents.

35. Whatever Kṛṣṇa has promised you after slaying Kaṁsa, the enemy of Sātvatas, in the arena[1] he will accomplish it for you.

36. Please do not get depressed, Oh highly fortunate ones ! You shall see Kṛṣṇa by your side. Just as the fire (latently) exists in fuel, he abides in the hearts of all beings.

37. (Please do not entertain doubt how he will leave his dear parents and come to you). None is extremely beloved of or disliked by him, for he is above attachments. None is superior or inferior or unequal to him as he is the same to all.[2]

38. He has no mother, no father, no wife, no children or other relatives. He has none who is his own or who is his non-self. He has no corporeal form at all.

39. He has no bound of *Karma*. But out of sport and for the protection of the righteous, he incarnates in good (e g. Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, bad (Fish, Boar) and mixed (e.g. Man-lion) types of species.)[3]

40. Though this unborn Lord is transcendental to and hence unaffected by *guṇas*, he assumes all the *guṇas* such as the *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. It is out of sportiveness that he creates, maintains and destroys the universe by these means.

41. Just as the whole earth appears rotating to an eye that is rolling, the Soul is regarded as the Agent through the influence of *ahaṁkāra* (Ego) while it is actually the mind that is active.[4]

1. Vide.Supra 45.23
2. Not traced in VB
3. Incarnates among gods, humans and sub-human beings—VJ.
4. Not traced in VJ.'s Text.

42. This glorious Lord Hari is not merely a son of you both, but is the Sun, Soul, father, mother and the Almighty Ruler of all.

43. Without the presence of and apart from the Lord, there is nothing which is seen or heard of, has happened in the past or present or can happen in future: nothing immobile or mobile, great or small is different from or without the presence of the Lord. For only he is everything and real.

44. In this way, while Nanda and Kṛṣṇa's follower (Uddhava) were talking, the whole night passed away (without their being aware of it). (At dawn) the cowherd women got up, lighted the lamps, duly worshipped the presiding deities of their home e. g. the threshold, and began to churn their curds.

45. The Gopīs appeared splendid with their jewels shining refulgent in the light of lamps, as they pulled to and fro the cords of the churning-rod, with (jingling) rows of bangles on their hands, with their big hips, heavy breasts and pearl necklaces moving (in a rhythmic motion), with their cheeks refulgent with the radiance of the rocking ear-rings (while churning), and with their countenance decked with red saffron.

46. The sound of the singing damsels of Vraja glorifying loudly in songs the deeds of the lotus-eyed God (Kṛṣṇa) mixed with the (gurgling) sound of the churning of the curds, filled the heaven and thereby whatever was inauspicious in all directions was dispelled.

47. When the sun rose, and the Gopīs of Vraja saw a gold-plated chariot at the door of Nanda, they enquired whose chariot it was.

48. Has Akrūra, the accomplice of Kaṁsa who carried away lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa to Mathura and thus accomplished Kaṁsa's purpose, come again?

49. Is he going to bring about the gratification of his dead master by offering us i.e. our bodies or flesh as *piṇḍa* (offering to the deceased) to him. While the women were talking thus, Uddhava who had finished his bath and morning (religious) duties, arrived there.

## CHAPTER FORTYSEVEN

*Uddhava's Discourse on the Real Nature of the Lord, Return to Mathura*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1-2. Observing that follower of Kṛṣṇa (viz. Uddhava) with (knee) long arms and eyes like (a pair of fresh-blown) lotuses clad in yellow (silk) raiment and wearing a garland of lotuses, with a lotus-like cheerful countenance, brightened with ear-rings set with resplendent jewels, all the damsels of Vraja, beaming with broad smiles, became extremely eager and curious to know who was that charming personality with fascinating looks, wearing dress and ornaments like those of Lord Kṛṣṇa, whence he came and his who's who. They surrounded him who had taken shelter under the lotus-feet of the Lord Kṛṣṇa of hallowing renown.

3. Ascertaining that he was the emissary of the spouse of goddess Lakṣmī (Kṛṣṇa) carrying a message for them, they bowed down to him with modesty. They received him courteously with bashful smiles, glances and sweet words. When he was comfortably seated, they enquired of him in great confidence (privately) :

4. "We learn that you are the attendant of Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Yadus, who have arrived here and that your honour has been deputed by the Lord for bringing about the happiness of his parents.

5. Otherwise, we do not see that there is anything worth remembering for him in the Gokula. The ties of affection of relatives and kinsmen are extremely difficult to dissociate even for sages.

6. In the case of others (who are not relatives) the friendship is contracted for achieving a purpose and it lasts till the purpose is accomplished, as in the case of love shown by men to (good-natured, guileless) women or by black bees to flowers.

7. Courtezans abandon a penniless (lover) ; subjects, an incompetent king; students who have completed the course of Vedic studies, their preceptors and the priests in sacrifice, the sacrificer who has paid their fees for performance of sacrifice.

8. Birds leave off the trees the fruits of which are exhausted; guests, the house after finishing their meals; beasts, a forest that is burnt down; a paramour after enjoying the women though attached to him."

9. When Uddhava, the emissary of Kṛṣṇa arrived at Vraja, the Gopīs whose body, mind and speech were completely devoted to Lord Govinda (Kṛṣṇa) disregarded the worldly usages and etiquettes (in behaving with strangers).

9*-A. VJ.'s Text differs (vide the footnote).

10. Remembering vividly every now and then the sportive activities of their Kṛṣṇa during his infancy and childhood, they glorified his deeds in songs and also wept, casting off their sense of bashfulness.

11. A certain Gopī who was musing over her union with Kṛṣṇa, saw a bee about her and imagining that it was the messenger deputed to her by her Beloved Kṛṣṇa, addressed it as follows[1] :

*The Gopī said*[2] :**

12. Oh bee![3] Oh friend of a rogue (Kṛṣṇa, a treacherous paramour) ! Don't touch our feet (and try to win our favour by submissive bows) with your beard-like tentacles

* VJ's text reads differently :

When Uddhava, the emissary of Kṛṣṇa, arrived at Vraja, he perceived that the Gopī's thereof had dedicated their mind, body of speech to Govinda so completely that they had lost the sense of worldly manners and etiquettes.

1. SG. and the annotators of Gauḍīya school of Vaiṣṇavism assert that this Gopī was Rādhā. SG quotes the *Agni P.* to support this view but the quotation is untraceable in the Gurumandal Calcutta edt. of the *Agni P.*

** Irrespective of the name of Gopī who sang this ode to the black bee, it is one of the best poetic outbursts of a love-lorn heart in Sanskrit literature. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas regard this as the expression of "divine ecstasy" in the *mahābhāva* stage. This expression of intense love is called *Citrajalpa* and is discussed in their works on rhetorics. As VT. points out, this stage is superior to Mokṣa in blissfulness.

2. VJ. States that this address of a black bee is equally applicable to Uddhava. Thus *Kitava-bandhu* in v. 12 means 'A friend or relative of Kṛṣṇa who was a thief (stole butter etc.)

3. *madhupa*—One who has kissed the nectar-like sweet lips—VR.

tinged with the saffron of the wreath (of Kṛṣṇa) that was pressed down upon the (Saffron-painted) breasts of our rival women (of Mathura). Let Kṛṣṇa, the chief of Madhus whose messenger you are, as described above carry with him, the favours of the proud ladies (of Mathura). (Why his attempt to court rustic women like us !) which will become a butt of ridicule in the assembly of Yadus.

13. Being infidel like you who (after sucking the honey) immediately desert the (innocent, good-natured) flower, he made us drink but once the seductive, enchanting nectar of his lips. He instantly abandoned us. Alas ! What a pity ? How is it that the (notoriously fickle) goddess of wealth continues to serve his lotus feet (I presume that) her mind must have been transported by the fascinating talk of Kṛṣṇa of hallowed renown.

14. (Thinking that it is to gain her favour that the black-bee is humming a song of Kṛṣṇa's glory, she retorts).

Oh six-legged one ![1] Why are you singing here, in such details, in front of us, homeless foreste-dwellers, the glory of the Ancient-most[2] person Kṛṣṇa the Lord of Yadus. (It is already too well known to us). Go hence. Let all his episodes be glorified in song in the presence of the female friends of Kṛṣṇa (the friend of Arjuna). Those lady-loves of Kṛṣṇa the agonies of whose breasts (and heart) are soothed by his embrace and other erotic acts will bestow on you your desired object.

15. Are there any women on the earth, in the celestial region or in the nether-world who are difficult to be won over by him with his alluring crafty sweet smile and the tempting dancing of his eyebrows ? What are we after all to him, the

1. *Ṣaḍaṅghri*—Oh Uddhava you have mastered six *darśanas*, you attend to sixfold duties, you have trampled underfoot the six objects of enjoyment which obstruct the path of devotion.—VJ.

2. *Purāṇa*—

(i) *purā pūrvam eva ṇam nivṛtti-rūpam*
*sukha-rūpam . . sāmpratam duḥkha-karam |*
which formerly gave pleasure to us but now brings grief—SG.

(ii) *pure vartamānam* 'Kṛṣṇa who is staying in the town'—VJ.

dust on whose feet is adored by goddess Lakṣmī ?[1] However (go and convey my message to him) that the epithet *uttama-śloka* (one of the most glorious renown) befits him who is on the side of the helpless and forlorn people like us.

16. (The black bee approached her feet as if to beg pardon). Get away. Take away your head from my feet. I know you thoroughly. Being an emissary of Mukunda (an expert in fraudulent courting) you are trained in the fine art of conciliation and winsomeness by means of sweet words. It is here at Vraja that he (ungratefully) deserted us who have abandoned our husbands, children, prospects of happiness in the next world (by conforming to social morality) for his sake. Inconstant at heart as he is, what is there to be gained by such reconciliation ?

17. (In his previous incarnation as Dāśarathi Rāma) Cruelhearted by nature, like a hunter, (desirous of eating the flesh of his kill), he (surreptitiously) hit with an arrow Vāli, the king of monkeys. Being dominated by one woman (his consort Sītā), he deformed another woman (Śūrpaṇakhā) who approached him with amorous purpose. Like a crow eating up *bali* (boiled rice etc. offered in *bhūta-yajña*), he (as Vāmana) ate up (accepted the worship offered by) King Bali and (ungratefully) bound him down (and threw him in a cave in the subterranean world.) Now enough of any friendship with that person of black complexion (Kṛṣṇa). But the wealth of his episodes is too (precious and sweet) to forgo.

1. *caraṇa raja...ka* : We are however not among the gullible women who fall a victim to his temptations. The term *uttama-śloka* is applicable to the partisans of the helpless—VR.

(ii) We are after-all forest dwellers. We only hear that the term *uttama śloka* is used for one who espouses the cause of the indigent and the helpless but that is not our experience (for he has no interest in us). VJ.

SG. is interesting. The gist is as follows :

Only low women (*kāḥ striyaḥ*) or all women fall a victim to him by his craftiness in enticing women. Goddess Lakṣmī may be worshipping the dust on his feet but none of us will stoop so low. Only a person of glorious renown deserves singing which he is not. *Or* He has become so closefisted (and hard-hearted) that he does not see us. (This is of course ironical).

18* In this world, many persons who have but once enjoyed a particle of his delightful sportive deeds which are (sweet as) nectar to the ears, have shaken themselves free from conflicting pairs of qualities (like love and hate, pleasure and pain). Reducing themselves to non-entities[1], they have at once forsaken their homes and members of their families in a bereaved state, and have adopted the ascetic way of life like that of birds (i.e. the way of life of *haṁsa* ascetics) and practice control of sense-organs[2].

19. Oh messenger of Kṛṣṇa ! Let other topics be discussed. For, like female deer, the gullible female mates of black-antelopes, which (mistakenly) believe in the enticing musical notes of the hunter (and get into a trap or are hit with an arrow), we innocent maid-servants of Kṛṣṇa trusted in his crafty professions of love as genuine, and have many times[3] seen and suffered from the acute pangs of love created by his amorous touch of nails.

20. Oh friend of our Darling Lord ! Are you redeputed by our Beloved that you have come again ? You are an honourable guest. Dear black-bee ! Please seek whatever you would like to have from me. Oh gentle-natured bee ! As his consort Lakṣmī is always by his side and has a place on his bosom, how are you going to take up from here to the side of the Lord, separation from whom is very painful and difficult.

21. Oh gentle black-bee ! Is the son of our Gopa-chief (i.e. Nanda,) now at Mathurā back from his preceptor's house ? Does he remember his father's house (i.e. his parents Nanda and Yaśodā) ? Does he ever refer to us his maid-servants, in his talk ? Would that (he return to Gokula and) place his arm fragrant with the (pigment of) *aguru*—sandal on the crown of my head (to soothe me)"

*. The SK wording of the text appears apparently a censure but it is a praise of the Lord in the deeper sense.

1. Go away out of sight like birds—SG.

2. *bahavaścaranti* : Just as birds fly through the support of the sky, the ascetics do so through the support of Lord Hari. These ascetics maintain their body for the Spiritual Knowledge.
*bhikṣu-caryām* : *indriya-grāma-nigraham*/ —SG.

3. Female deer suffer but once when hit by an arrow, but our sufferings are life-long.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

22. Having heard this (expression of ardent love for Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava consoled those Gopīs who were eagerly desirous of seeing Kṛṣṇa, with the messages of their Darling and addressed them as follows :

*Uddhava said* :

23. Oh Gopīs ! You have completely achieved all the objects in human life (e.g. *dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa*) and are adored and praised by the world, inasmuch as your hearts are dedicated to the glorious Lord Vāsudeva.

24. Devotion unto Kṛṣṇa is engendered[1] by charitable gifts, observance of vows, austerities, performance of *homa* (sacrifice) muttering of a *mantra* or God's name, Vedic (scriptural) studies, self-control and such other meritorious acts.

25. It is fortunate of you that you, respectable ladies, have established such an unsurpassably supreme (standard of) devotion into the glorious Lord of hallowing renown as is extremely difficult even for sages.

26. You deserve congratulations as you have renounced (attachment to) your sons, husbands, your own persons, kith and kin as well as your homes, and have sought after the Supreme person Kṛṣṇa.

27. Oh highly blessed Gopīs ! Due to your separation from the Lord, you have accomplished an unflinching, absolute devotion unto Lord Adhokṣaja (Kṛṣṇa). You have certainly rendered a great favour unto me by giving me a glimpse of your ardent devotion to the Lord.

28. Let the message of your dear Lord which will bring delight to you be heard (alternatively). It is to convey this message that I, as a *confidant* of the Lord, have come here.

*The Glorious Lord said* :

29. As I pervade all as their Inner Soul, there cannot be any separation between you and me. Just as the five elements—the ether, air, fire, water and earth—are found in all

1. v.l., *bhaktir na sādhyate* 'Is not engendered'—VR.

beings, similarly, I abide (as the support) in the mind, vital breath, elements, conative and cognitive senses and qualities.

30. By the force of my Māyā Potency and in association with *bhūtas* (elements), the senses and the *guṇas*, I create myself (in various forms) within myself, protect them, and destroy them.

31. The Self (*ātman*) is absolutely pure, distinct, untainted and unconcerned with *guṇas*, an embodiment of consciousness and knowledge. He appears (as *Viśva*, *Taijasa* and *Prājña*) in the states of sleep, dream and wakefulness through mental states (and not directly) which are the creations of Māyā.

32.* Ever alert and vigilant, a person should try to control that mind with which he broods over the objects of senses which are unreal like the objects seen in a dream, and runs after the senses (sense-object) even during wakefulness.

33. According to the opinion of the spiritually wise, the study of the Vedas, the Yoga (with its eightfold path), the Sāṅkhya teaching (discriminating between the soul and the non-soul), renunciation (*saṁnyāsa*),—austerities, control (over the senses), truthfulness—all these have mind-control as their goal, even as all the rivers terminate in the ocean.

34. It is with a view to attract your mind constantly to me while you eagerly meditate upon me, (and thus to secure our mental nearness) that I, though your beloved, am staying far away beyond the ken of your eyes.

35. The mind of women is not so much ardently drawn to and absorbed in their beloved while he lives near, just before their eyes, as and when he is staying far away.

36. As you have completely dedicated your entire heart resigning all its activities to me, and are constantly contemplating on me, you will attain me within a short time.

37. Those ladies who being detained at Vraja (by their husbands etc.) could not participate in the *Rāsa*) in the forest, have attained to me by contemplating on my exploits, Oh blessed ladies".

* Not traced in VJ.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

38. Having heard the message of their most beloved Lord, the damsels of Vraja whose recollections of Lord Kṛṣṇa were revived by it, became highly delighted and spoke to Uddhava.

*The Gopīs said* :

39. Luckily the tyrant Kaṁsa, the deadly enemy and persecutor of Yadus is killed along with his followers. It is a matter of good fortune that the immortal Lord (Kṛṣṇa) is living happily with his relatives who have obtained all their objects (through his grace).

40. (Some asked) : Does Kṛṣṇa, the elder brother of Gada who was adored by us with affectionate, bashful smiles and loving glances, impart the same delight to the women of the city (Mathura), Oh gentle Uddhava?

41. (Others asked) : Highly expert in erotics and beloved of excellent women as he is, how can he fail to (be won over) and bound down by their love when he is greeted with words (expressing love) and amorous gestures by them.

42. (Someone asked) : Does the Lord of cows (or of Gokula ever remember us, the rustic women, causally, in some context in the assembly of the urban women of Mathura, during his free talk of his past life, Oh piousone![1]

43. (Others asked) : Does he ever remember those nights (at Vraja) when in Vṛndāvana grove lovely with blooming lilies and jasmines and resplendent with the full moon, he sported with us, his beloveds, and when in the ring of the Rāsa dance resonant with the jingling of anklets his charming stories were sung by us ?

44. (Some asked) : Will Kṛṣṇa, the descendent of Daśārha ever come here to enliven us who are tormented with grief on account of separation from him, by the life-giving touch of his limbs, like Indra refreshing woods (scorched with heat of summer) with rain-clouds.

45. (Others exclaimed) : Why should Kṛṣṇa (bother to) come here at all when he has obtained a kingdom, slain

1. The adj. implies that Uddhava being pious must tell the truth. —*SG*

all the enemies, will have married a number of princesses and is living happily in the company of his friends.

46. (Others gave out the fact of the matter)

What purpose of the Supreme Soul, the Consort of Lakṣmī (Kṛṣṇa) be served by us, the forest-dwellers or by others (princesses), when he himself has all his desires accomplished and is perfect (within himself).

47. Even the public woman Piṅgalā[1] has observed that desirelessness is the real happiness. Knowing that as we do, our longing and hope to meet Kṛṣṇa is difficult to overcome.

48. Who could detach one's mind from the secret talks one had with the Lord of hallowing renown from whose person Śrī seldom dissociates herself, even though he does not long for her ?

49-50. What a pity ! The river Yamunā, the mount Govardhana, the woodlands of Vṛndāvana, the cows, the musical notes of flutes—all associated with Kṛṣṇa with Balarāma as his companion—poignantly remind us again and again of Kṛṣṇa, the son of the Gopa Nanda, through his foot-prints which are the asylum of the goddess Lakṣmī. Alas ! It is simply impossible to forget him, Oh Uddhava.

51. Our hearts have been fascinated and spirited away with his seductive gait, enchanting laughter, sportive glances, and honeyed words. How can we forget him, Oh Uddhava ?

52. Oh Lord ! Oh Consort of goddess Lakṣmī ! Oh Lord of Vraja who destroyed our afflictions ! Oh Lord of cows ! Be pleased to lift up Gokula that is submerged in the sea of grief.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

53. Thereupon, the Gopīs whose agonies of separation from Kṛṣṇa, were removed by the message of Kṛṣṇa, realized that Kṛṣṇa the Supra-sensuous Lord was within

1. Piṅgalā—Name of a prostitute in Mithilā. Once she was disappointed as none came to her in spite of her waiting, she realized the bliss of transcending desires and hopes. Avadhūta regarded her as his preceptor *vide, infra* 11.7.34, 11.8. 22-44.

them—nay was identical with them—and they worshipped Uddhava with due respects.[1]

54. Uddhava stayed there for some months alleviating the grief of those cowherd women. He brought delight to the settlement of those cowherds (Gokula) by glorifying in songs the delightful stories of Lord Kṛṣṇa's sportive activities.

55. For as many days, Uddhava stayed at Nanda's Vraja, (they were so absorbed) in talking about Kṛṣṇa, those days of the residents of Vraja flitted away as if they were so many moments only.

56. Observing devoutly the river Yamunā, Vṛndāvana, mount Govardhana, the valleys and the blossoming trees, (where Kṛṣṇa roamed and sported and) which reminded the people of Vraja of Kṛṣṇa (causing thereby a longing to see him) that Servant of Hari spent that time in joyfulness.

57. Uddhava was highly pleased to notice the intense mental anguish of the Gopīs (as described above[2]) caused by their (longing for and) absorption of their minds in Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava paid his respects to them and (in justification of the bowing down to Gopa women by a Kṣattriya like himself and sang (of their glory) as follows :

58. "Only these Gopa women have really vindicated their worthiness of possessing a human body (life as a human being) since their heart is steeped in Supreme Love (and devotion) to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the protector of cows—a stage which those who are scared of *saṁsāra* (and aspire after liberation from it i. e. *mumukṣus*), the sages (who are *muktas* i. e. freed from the bondages of *saṁsāra*) and we (the devotees of the Lord) aspire. To a person interested in the stories of the Infinite Lord, what importance is there to the kinds of birth as a Brāhmaṇa (viz. physical heredity from Brāhmaṇa parents, ceremonial birth by means of investiture with the sacred thread and initiation in the sacred Gāyatrī *mantra* and ritua-

1. They worshipped Uddhava regarding him as if he was Lord Kṛṣṇa himself.—VJ.

2. vide Supra vv 4-21 and vv 39-52

listic birth with consecration for sacrificial performance)[1] *OR*, Of what use is the repeated birth as four-faced god Brahmā if one has no fascination or liking for the stories of the Infinite Lord[2].

59. What a contrast is this ! (On the one hand) these rustic forest-dwelling women condemned for adultery[3] (in the eyes of the public as they abandoned their husbands and offered themselves to Lord Kṛṣṇa) and their deeprooted intense absolute devotion to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Soul, on the other. Certainly, the Almighty Lord himself bestows the highest beatitude upon his devotees who, even though ignorant, always remember him and resort to him, just as nectar, the king of medicines when used (unknowingly by an ailing patient, cures him).

60. Oh ! How covetable was the blissful Grace that was showered on the cowherd women of Vraja at the time of Rāsa dance when all their cravings and longings for getting themselves embraced by the mighty arm of the Lord were amply satisfied—A grace never enjoyed even by goddess Śrī who is always closely associated with his person, nor by the celestial damsels whose fragrance and splendour of complexion is like lotuses—What need be said of others ? (Much less can others expect it).

61. How strongly I desire to be one of these shrubs, creepers, plants or herbs of Vṛndāvana which have the good luck to come in contact with the dust on the feet of these cowherd women who forsook their relatives so difficult to abandon, and the traditional path followed by the noble and the good (which is equally difficult for chaste women to give up) and took to the path of devotion that leads to Lord Kṛṣṇa who is sought after by the Vedas.

1. This explanation is based on the 1st way dissolving the compound in the text :

*ananta-kathā-rasasya* : *Ananta+kathā+rasa.*

2. This will be the interpretation if the compound in text mentioned above is dissolved as *Ananta+kathā+a-rasa*—ŚR.

3. SG. regards this as a comparison between Gopis and Uddhava who call themselves: *vayaṁ vyabhicāra-duṣṭāḥ*—we who are averse to pious deeds.

62. The Gopīs dispelled all the agonies of their heart by embracing Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus-feet placed on their bosoms during Rāsa dance—the lotus-feet of the Lord which are adored by the goddess Śrī, god Brahmā and others who have accomplished all their desires, and by masters of yoga in their hearts.

63. I bow down again and again the dust under the feet of the damsels of Nanda's Vraja, whose loud singing of the stories of Lord Hari sanctifies the three worlds.

*Śrī Śuka said :*

64. Then, after taking leave of the Gapīs, Yaśodā and Nanda and bidding good-bye to Gopas, Uddhava, the scion of Daśārha, became ready to depart (on his return journey) and mounted his chariot.

65. When he just got out of his house, Nanda and others brought in their hands different presents (presumably for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma) and with eyes dimmed with tears of love, spoke to him affectionately as follows :

66. "May all our mental activities be concentrated on the lotus-feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. May our speech (oral activities) be ever engaged in uttering the name of the Lord and may our body (physical activities) be engaged in bowing to him (and doing such worshipful services).

67. Wandering whithersoever (or in whatever species of birth) we be, as a result of our *karman* (actions) or by the will of the Almighty Lord, may our love be constant in the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa in consequence of our auspicious deeds and charitable gifts (performed by us in our past lives)"

68. Thus honoured by the cowherds through their devotion to Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava returned to Mathura protected by Kṛṣṇa, Oh King Parīkṣit.

69. Lying prostrate before Kṛṣṇa, he reported to Kṛṣṇa the effusion of intense devotion of the people of Vraja (unto him), and handed over the presents (sent by the cowherds) to Vasudeva, Balarāma and King Ugrasena.

## CHAPTER FORTYEIGHT

*Visit to the Houses of Trivakrā and Akrūra*

*Śri Śuka said* :

1. Now knowing the earnest desire of the maid-servant Trivakrā who was pining with passionate love for him, the Almighty Lord, the In-dwelling soul of all, who is omniscient, went to her house with an intention to gratify her cherished desire.

2. The house was equipped with highly costly articles of furniture; was enriched with means of stimulating erotic passions, was decorated with garlands of pearls, flags, canopies, beds, seats, was perfumed with fragrant incenses, lights (emitting sweet scent), wreaths of flowers and perfumes.

*Texts of VR and SD add* :

2A. (It was beautified with beautiful paintings in various colours pertaining(or designed according) to *kāmaśāstra* (science of Erotics).

3. Beholding that he was coming, she (Tri-vakrā) in a flurry, quickly rose from her seat, went forward along with her female companions to pay him due respect, and warmly received him by offering a high, comfortable seat and other articles of worship.

4. Uddhava also was similarly received as a pious person, but he touched with his hand (to pay respects to) the seat offered to him, and sat on the floor. (To carry out his part as a man) Kṛṣṇa also, following the practice of the world, (got up from his seat and of his own accord quickly entered the bed-room furnished with costly bed.

5. Embellishing herself after bath, with cosmetics, fine clothes, ornaments, garlands of flowers, scents, betel-leaves chewing, nectarlike drinks and the like, she approached Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of goddess Lakṣmī—ogling him with amorous glances and bashful sportive smiles.

6. He called to his side that beautiful woman who was a bit nervous and hesitant through bashfulness, as it was their first meeting. He took her by the hand that was adorned with bracelets and made her sit on the bed. He gave that

charming lady her desired pleasure for the slight act of merit she had done, by offering him the pigment (at his request, while going to Kaṁsa for service).

7. Enjoying the fragrance of his feet, swept off the agonies in her breast and bosom specially tormented by love-fever, and those of her eyes as well, by (the soothing touch of) his feet. She clasped in her arms her beloved Kṛṣna, the embodiment of bliss who was now on her bosom and thus got rid of the suffering of separation she had gone through, for a long time.

8. Alas ! Having thus obtained in return for the offer of pigment the presence of the Lord of the Absolute state (who confers Final Beatitude), the Supreme Ruler of the Universe so difficult to attain, the unfortunate woman begged of him the following.

9. She said, "Oh beloved-most Lord ! Be pleased to stay with me for some days here in my house and give me the pleasure of your company. Oh lotus-eyed god ! I cannot forgo your company."

10. Having conferred upon her the boon as per her desire and having honoured her (with presents), the Lord of all the universe who respects others, returned with Uddhava to his (Vasudeva's) splendid palace.

11. Having propitiated the All-pervading Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Ruler of all rulers of the universe (like god Brahmā) who is so very difficult to be pleased, a person who seeks what is agreeable to the mind (viz. the pleasures of the sense) is certainly a man of perverted intelligence inasmuch as the so-called pleasures are trivial (and not worth craving).

12. With a desire to do a good turn to Akrūra in his interest and with the intention of sending him on some errand, Lord Kṛṣṇa accompanied by Balarāma and Uddhava went to the house of Akrūra.

13. Seeing from a distance that those greatest among foremost of men who were his own relations, were coming, he was overjoyed. He rose from his seat and went forward to receive them. He embraced them and honoured them.

14.* He bowed down to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma (as he knew their divine nature, though they were his juniors in age) and was reciprocally respected by them. When they were comfortably seated, he worshipped them with due formalities

15-16. He washed their feet and sprinkled over his head that water (with which he washed them). He received them respectfully by presenting articles of worship such as rich clothes, excellent perfumes, wreathes of flowers and ornaments. He bowed them bending down his head and kneaded their feet after taking them in his lap. Modest and devoted as he was, Akrūra submitted Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as follows:

17. "How fortunate it is that the wicked Kaṁsa along with his followers has been killed by you both and this clan of yours has been not only rescued from the (seemingly) unending harassment and difficulties but is made prosperous as well.

18. Both of you constitute Pradhāna (Primordial matter) and Puruṣa (the self, in Sāṅkhya terminology). Both of you constitute (the material and efficient) causes of universe and are inherent in it. Without you neither cause nor effect can exist.

19. Oh Lord Kṛṣṇa who is the Supreme Brahman Itself ! Having evolved the universe through your potencies (such as *rajas* and others) you have entered into it (as its Indwelling Soul or Inner Controller) ! you appear as many in various innumerable forms which are within the ken of sight and hearing.

20. Just as the constituent elements like earth, water, fire etc exhibit themselves in various forms of beings mobile and immobile as through various species of creatures, so your honour who is the one, absolute, self-dependent Supreme self, manifest yourself in innumerable forms (in various species such as human beings, beasts etc. and in various stages of life such as child, youth etc. which are but your creations (and thus appear as many).

21. Through your potencies in the form of *guṇas* viz. *rajas*, *sattva* and *tamas*, you evolve, protect and dissolve the universe. But you are not bound or affected either by the *guṇas* or by the actions. Essentially constituted of pure knowledge and

* Not traced in VJ.'s text.

consciousness as you are, nothing could work as a limiting condition on you.

22. As physical body and other limiting conditions (which are supposed to subject the soul to limitations and bondage) are not observed predicable in your case, no birth or difference can be predicated of the soul in reality (much less so in the case of the Supreme Soul viz. your honour). There is no bondage or Liberation (*mokṣa*) therefrom for you. It is our lack of discrimination and ignorance which project these on you.

23. Whenever this ancient path (of religion prescribed in the Vedas promulgated by you for the good of the world is threatened with obstruction by the false heterodox creeds, your honour assumes a form (constituted) of pure, unalloyed *sattva guṇa* (for the re-establishment of the original Vedic path).

24. You are that Supreme Lord, now incarnated in the house of Vasudeva along with Balarāma, your partmanifestation, with the mission of removing the burden of the earth by slaying one hundred *akṣauhiṇis* of kings born with non-celestial i.e. demonic *asura aṁśa* and also to enhance the glory of your (Yadu) race.

25. Oh Supreme Ruler ! Today our homes have been rendered highly blessed and fortunate indeed inasmuch as they are visited by you who are the creator and the preceptor of the world, the very embodiment of all gods, ancestors, beings and the kings and the water washing whose feet (viz. the river Gaṅgā) hallows the three worlds. Oh Supra-sensuous Lord !

26. What learned person would seek resort to any person other than you who are so beloved of your devotees, true of word, friendly and grateful and who bestow on all his votaries and friends who resort to you, their desired objects—nay his own self which is above decay or growth.

27. Oh Janārdana ! Luckily you, access to whom is very difficult even to the great masters of Yoga as well to the lords of gods, have become manifest to us. Be pleased to cut off cords your Māyā quickly (and immediately) regarding sons, wives, money, relatives and of our very body.

*Śrī Śuka said*:

28. The glorious Lord Hari who was worshipped and glorified by his votary Akrūra, spoke to him smilingly, and addressed to Akrūra hypnotising him as it were with his sweet and pleasant words.

*The Lord said*:

29. "You are our elderly relative (or preceptor), uncle. You are our ever praiseworthy relative. We are after all your children who are to be protected, nourished and looked after with compassion.

30. Highly blessed and most adorable persons like your honour should always be waited upon by persons desirous of achieving their *summum bonum*. For gods are always intent on achieving their own purpose (and are selfish), but saintly persons are never so selfish at all. (They oblige you without any expectation in return while gods won't grant you anything unless they are pleased by the offer of oblations in the sacrifice etc. Hence saints are greater then gods).

31* Not that the holy places (*tīrthas*) consisting of water and gods represented in earth and stone images do not purify but they do so after a pretty long time, while saintly persons sanctify one immediately at the first sight.

32. You are verily the worthiest of our friends. With the object of doing some good to pāṇḍavas and making enquiries (probing the real state of affairs) about them, please do go to Hastinapura.

33. We have heard that after the death of their father those grieving children along with their grief-striken mother were brought by the king Dhṛtarāṣṭra to his capital and they stay there.

34. It is certain that king Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the son of Ambikā who is both blind and of poor intellect, is under the control of his wicked son and does not treat them impartially.

* The term *Tīrtha* does not connote a storage of water but it is the deity presiding over them that is implied. The same is the case with images of gods made of earth or stone. But these deities have to be served for a long time to please them. But not so the saints—VJ.

35. Do go now and ascertain his present behaviour (with them) whether it be good or otherwise. After knowing the facts correctly we shall so manage (the situation) as will be conducive to the welfare and happiness of our friends."

36. Having briefed Akrūra (regarding his mission to Hastinapura) the glorious Almighty Lord Hari straightway returned to his palace along with Balarāma and Uddhava.

## CHAPTER FORTYNINE

*Akrūra's Mission to Hastinapura*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1-2. Having arrived at Hastinapura, the noted capital of the great and glorious kings of the Puru dynasty, he saw there Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the son of Ambikā along with Bhīṣma, Vidura, Kuntī : Bāhlīka along with his son Somadatta, Droṇa, the descendant of Bhāradvāja along with Kṛpa of the Gautama family, Karṇa, Suyodhana (i.e. Duryodhana), Aśvatthāman, the son of Droṇa, Pāṇḍavas and other friends thereof.

3. Having met his relatives in the appropriate manner (to establish closer contacts), Akrūra, the son of Gāndinī, was respectfully enquired about by them about their friends (at Mathura) and he also reciprocally asked them about their well being.

4. With a view to probe and know in depth the behaviour of the king whose sons were wicked and who was himself feeble-minded, and who was guided by the will of the wicked (like Śakuni), Akrūra stayed there many months.

5-6. Pṛthā (Kuntī) and Vidura completely reported to him all the wicked acts such as administering poison (to Bhīma) and others by Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons who could not tolerate and felt jealous of Pāṇḍavas' majesty, prowess, physical strength, heroism, modesty and other excellent virtues as well as the love and loyalty the subjects had for them; they also told him what they intended to do (to harm Pāṇḍavas).

7. Approaching her brother (cousin) Akrūra who came to visit her, Kuntī (Pṛthā) remembered her birth-place and with her eyes full of tears enquired :

8. "Oh gentle Akrūra ! Do my parents (Śūrasena and Māriṣā), brothers (Vasudeva and others), sisters (Śruta-devā etc.), nephews (Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and others), respectable ladies in the house (like Devakī and others) and female friends remember me ?

9. Does my nephew, the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa, the protector of his dependants and affectionate to his votaries, and the lotus-eyed Balarāma ever remember the sons of their paternal aunt?

10. Would Kṛṣṇa care to comfort with words of consolation me who am grieving here in the midst of enemies like a female deer in the midst of wolves. Would he do so to my children who are now fatherless.

11. Oh Kṛṣṇa ! Kṛṣṇa ! Oh great *yogin* ! Oh Soul of the Universe ! Oh Creator of the world ! Be kind and protect me who have sought Your protection, Oh Govinda, I am suffering along with my children.

12. To persons who are afraid of death and of the cycle of births (*saṁsāra*), I do not see any other refuge except the lotus feet of yours—of the Supreme which confer Liberation from *saṁsāra*.

13. Bow to Kṛṣṇa, the pure Brahman (unalloyed with Māyā), the Supreme Soul, the Lord of Yogas, the very embodiment of *yoga* ! I have sought asylum in you."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

14. In this way, remembering her relatives, and Kṛṣṇa, the Ruler of the world, your paternal great-grand mother lamented loudly, in grief.

15. Akrūra who looked upon pleasure and pain with equanimity and Vidura of great glory, consoled Kuntī by telling her the divine parentage of her sons (and their mission to help Kṛṣṇa in the reduction of the burden of the earth).

16. When he was about to return to Mathura, Akrūra approached King Dhṛtarāṣṭra who practised discrimination between his sons and Pāṇḍavas and was specially partial and

attached to his sons. He communicated to the king in the midst of his relatives, the message of his well-intentioned relations such as Kṛṣṇa and others.

*Akrūra said* :

17. Oh son of Vicitravīrya ! You are the enhancer of the glory of the Kuru race ! But after the demise of your brother Pāṇḍu, you have now occupied the throne (in stead of installing Pāṇḍu's son--the legal heir—on the throne).

18. By governing the earth with piety (and as per code of righteous government), pleasing your subjects by your (spotless) character and behaving with strict impartiality with your relatives, you can still attain prosperity and good reputation.

19. If you act otherwise, you will be censured in this world and shall go to dark hell hereafter. You, therefore, treat impartially your sons and the Pāṇḍavas.

20. There is no possibility of having eternal companionship with anybody at any time in this world—not even with one's body. What need be said of contacts with one's wife and sons, Oh King.

21. A creature comes into being alone and it dies alone, all by itself. It is all alone when it experiences the fruits of good deeds or suffers the consequences of his evil actions.

22. Others who go under the name of sons (*lit.* one deserving nourishment) carry away the wealth accumulated by unfair means of this dull-witted fellow, as the brood of acquatic animals share waters.

23. A foolish person who unrighteously nourishes life, wealth, sons and others under the wrong notion that they are his own, finds himself deserted by them, for good, even when he has not yet accomplished his objective of enjoying them.

24. A person not knowing his real interest, being deserted by them (viz. wealth, sons etc. which he regarded as his own) carries the load of his sins himself as he is averse to religion and with his hopes of enjoyment, unfulfilled, he enters the hall of blinding darkness.

25. Oh King ! Realizing that this world is like a dream,

illusion or an idle fancy, you control your own mind by yourself and be impartial and serene, Oh Lord.

*Dhṛtarāṣṭra replied* :

26. Oh *Dānapati* (the most distinguished donor of charities) ! As your honour utters this sweet, salutary speech, I do not feel sated with it, just as a mortal would feel after obtaining the nectar.

27. Oh gentle-natured Akrūra ! Your sweet and righteous advice, however, does not get fixed in my fickle mind which is partial through affection towards my sons, any more than a flash of lightening into the mount Sudâman.

28. What human being can violate the decree of the Supreme Ruler who has now descended in Yadu's race for removing the burden of the earth.

29. Bow unto that Supreme Lord who, having created this universe by his Māyā of incomprehensible ways and having entered it afterwards (as the Inner Controller) he apportions the *karmas* and their fruits, and whose sportive acts which are very difficult to comprehend and who is the main cause and the ultimate goal of this wheel of transmigration (*saṁsāra*).

*Śrī Śuka said* :

30. Having thus gauged the mind of the king Dhṛtarāṣṭra and taking leave of his well-wishers and relatives, Akrūra of the Yādava clan, returned to Mathurā.

31. Oh Parīkṣit (the scion of the Kuru race) ! (After his arrival at Mathurā), he reported to Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, the behaviour of Dhṛtarāṣṭra towards Pāṇḍavas—the maiu purpose of his deputation to Hastināpura.

## CHAPTER FIFTY*

*Settlement at the Fort of Dvārakā*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. Asti and Prāpti were the two queens of Kaṁsa Oh prominent Bhārata. When their husband was slain, they were afflicted with sorrow. They went to their father's house.

2. Stricken with grief, they reported fully to their father Jarāsandha, king of Magadha, the cause of their widowhood.

3. Hearing that unpleasant account, he was filled with grief and indignation, Oh King Parīkṣit. He made a great endeavour to wipe out the Yādavas from the face of the earth.

4. Accompanied with an army of twenty-three *akṣauhiṇīs* Jarāsandha besieged Mathurā, the capital of Yadus, on all sides.

5-6. Observing the army of Jarāsandha was surging forth like a sea overflowing its coastal limits, and that His capital was besieged by it and His own people were struck with panic, the glorious Lord Hari who assumed a human form with a special mission (of removing the burden of the earth) considered the measures suitable for the exigencies of that time and place and also the purpose of His incarnation (on the earth).

7-8. "I shall now destroy this army amounting to many akṣauhiṇīs consisting of infantry, cavalry, chariot-corps and elephants, in the service of Jarāsandha's tributary princes and brought together (and deployed) by Jarāsandha, King of Magadha, as this force is nothing but an accumulated burden to the earth. But Jarāsandha should not be killed, as he will again make efforts and mobilise more forces (and help disburdenment of the earth).

9. This incarnation of Mine is for this mission, viz. removal of the burden of the earth, protection of the righteous and the elimination of the wicked.

*Henceforth there is much divergence in the Texts of ŚR and VJ. For the convenience of readers, additional verses in VJ are translated in the footnotes and the additional special chapters in VJ are given separately as an *Appendix* to the X Skandha.

10. Another personality (e.g. the boor incarnation) has been assumed by me for the protection of the path of righteousness and termination of the unrighteousness when it becomes predominant, at times.*

11. While Kṛṣṇa was thinking in this way, there descended near him, from the sky, two chariots refulgent like the sun, (each) equipped with military appurtenances (armour, banner etc.) and manned by charioteers.**

* (*Here the Text of VJ. gives the following additional verses*).

10.1 While Kṛṣṇa was pondering thus, the mighty king of Magadha with his big army, laid siege to Mathurā including its groves and parks.

10.2-4. According to the commands of Jarāsandha, the Magadhan king, Kaliṅga, Cekitāna, Dantavaktra, Vidūratha, Ulmuka, Veṇudāri, Śālva and the wicked-minded Śiśupāla, king of Caidyas, reached the eastern gate (of Mathurā) and blocked it. Vinda, Anuvinda of Avanti, Virāṭa, Darada, Ekalavya, Bālhika and the king of Panjab (land of five rivers) besieged the southern gate.

10. 5-6. Directed by Jarāsandha, the powerful king Pauṇḍraka, Yudhāmanyu, Bṛhat-Kṣatra, Śālva, Bhūriśravas, Uttamaujas, Rukmi, Druma, Sudaksiṇa assailed the western gate and beleaguered the city of Mathurā.

10. 7-8. Drupada Śiśupāla, Trigarta, Jayadratha, Śakuni, Somadatta and the mighty Kuṇinda—all proud of their power—proceeded to the northern gate under the leadership of Jarāsandha and laid siege there, Oh prominent Bhārata.

10.9 Like a sea overflowing its coastal limits, they blockaded all the four gates. Uttering war-cries, blowing conches a number of times, they became ready for action and beat thousands of kettle-drums.

10.10. Hearing that tumultuous uproar of the combined forces of those kings at the gates, which resembled the roaring of the inundating oceans at the end of the universe, Kṛṣṇa was not at all disturbed in mind like a proud mighty lion on hearing the howling of a pack of jackals.

** The Vrindavana edition quotes in VJ.'s com. the following verses as *additions in VJ.'s text* :

11.1 (There appeared) the terrific yet beautiful discus Sudarśana of thousand spokes, and the auspicious heavy mace named *Kaumodakī* as it belonged to Nārāyaṇa who imparts delight and happiness to the world.

11.2 (There appeared) the most formidable bow called Śārṅga, bent at three points and equipped with a string; sword called Nandaka of sharp edge and pointed at the end; two light and attractive quivers with inexhaustible store of arrows.

12. Seeing their ancient celestial weapons appearing there of their own accord, Kṛṣṇa, the Supra-Sensuous Lord, spoke to Balarāma.

13. "Look, Oh respectable brother, the great peril that is threatening to befall Yadus, of whom you are the protector, Oh Powerful Lord. Behold, this chariot of yours has arrived along with your favourite weapons.

14. Getting into this vehicle, wipe out this (hostile) army and rescue your people from the impending disaster. Our incarnation is certainly for this purpose, Oh powerful Lord, that we should afford protection and felicity to the righteous.

15. Remove the burden of the earth now known as "the army of twentythree *akṣauhiṇīs*" Having planned together thus, both the descendants of Daśārha (viz. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma) put on their armours (armed with their respective weapons and accompanied with a small band of selected warriors mounted their chariots and sallied forth from the city of Mathurā.*

11.3 (The chariot was yoked with) horses called Saibya, Sugrīva, Meghapuṣpa and Balāhaka. And a heavy and sturdy plough and a club (pestle) for Balarāma.

11.4-A. These weapons alighted from the sky for using them in the battle.

15.1 Oh King Parīkṣit ! Accompanied with a small army consisting of many prominent Yadus well-armed and clad in coats of mail, both of them rushed out of the great city.

15.2 When Kṛṣṇa came out of his residence, he summoned all Vṛṣṇis and commanded them to defend forthwith the four gates of the city.

15.3 Kṛṣṇa deployed Vasudeva, Niśaṭha, Kṛtavarmā and Uddhava at the eastern gate, Oh descendant of Bharata !

15.4 Hari sent to defend the northern gate Ugrasena, Sudāman, Pṛthu and Vipṛthu.

15.5 Hari sent to the Western gate extremely powerful warriors Sātyaki, Gada, Prasena and Akrūra, the son of Gāndinī.

15.6-7 Kṛṣṇa of supremely heroic lustre, equipped with weapons of his choice, himself with Dāruka as his charioteer and with Balarāma to help him, sallied forth through the northern gate. The Lord of the universe blew out his conch of very loud sound, inspiring terror in Daityas and Dānavas.

16. Surrounded by a small force, both of them kṛṣṇa and Balarāma equipped themselves with their beautiful weapons and went out of the city. Hari with Dāruka as his charioteer came out of the city and blew conch.

17. It (the challenging conch-blowing) sent a cold shivering of shudder in the hearts of the armies of the enemy. Seeing them both, Jarāsandha said : 'Oh Kṛṣṇa ! Meanest of all men' (also 'to whom other men are inferior', 'the best among men').

15.8 Kṛṣṇa, the consort of goddess Lakṣmī, smilingly spoke to Dāruka who had occupied the front seat (of the chariot-driver), in the chariot.

*The Glorious Lord directed :*

Take the chariot to the place where Śiśupāla the king of Caidyas, and Jarāsandha, the king of Magadhas, have taken their positions, Oh knower of military duties (*dharma*). I shall thoroughly satisfy with my arrows, the (itch of fighting of all the) kings very proud of fighting.

*Śrī Śuka continued :*

15.9 Thus directed by the Lord, Dāruka quickly drove the horses to that spot and Govinda, the conqueror of inimical forces, roared like a lion.

15.10 Blaring out his conch, Balarāma also sent forth a roar like a lion that shuddered the hostile forces, causing nervous anxiety and fear in their hearts.

15.11 At the eastern gate there was a terrible fight between the Yadus and the (attacking) princes, eight princes (like Kaliṅga etc.) fighting with the four (such as Vasudeva and others). It was a miraculous sight indeed.

15.12 At the southern gate, there was tough fighting between Yadus who were inspired with confidence by Kṛṣṇa and the inimical princely forces.

15.13 At the western gate also the battle between formidable Yādava archers and the army of opposing princes was so thrilling that it made one's hair stand on their ends.

15.14 Fired with the ambition of conquering both the worlds (here and hereafter), Yadus, though beaten by princes valorous as the king of gods, did not recede from the battlefield, Oh King.

15.15 In that battle, god Viṣṇu (i.e. Lord Kṛṣṇa) beloved of the three worlds, an eminently brave member of the Yādava clan, reached the spot where the most terrible kings of Caidya (Siśupāla) and of Magadha (viz. Jarāsandha) were positioned.

18. I do not wish to fight with a young boy like you as you are alone. It is shameful (to fight with you). I won't fight with you who lay concealed so long (out of Kaṁsa's fear) you stupid fellow ! The murderer of relatives ! You go away (Fighting is not your profession) as you are a *gupta* (a man of Vaiś'ya community, as you are the son of the cowherd Nanda.

19. Oh Balarāma ! If you have faith and confidence in you, muster some courage and fight with me. Go to heaven leaving your body shattered with my arrows or kill me (if you dare).

*The glorious Lord replied* :

20. "Those who are really brave do not boast but display their valour. We do not take seriously the words of those who are delirious (or of unbalanced mind through grief due to the death of your son-in-law) or who are on the point of death (as you are now)."

21. Jarāsandha, the foster-son of the demoness Jarā, assailed both Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, the descendants of Madhu, and surrounded them both, their detachment of soldiers, vehicles (chariots), flags, horses, charioteers with a big formidable army, just as a tempestuous wind would cover the sun with clouds or the fire with particles of dust.

22. Finding that the chariots of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma which were distinguished by the ensigns with the figures of Garuḍa and Palmyra tree had become invisible in that battle, the women of Mathurā who occupied seats on the top of the raṃparts, mansions and towers were struck with grief and fell in swoon.

23. Perceiving that his own army was sorely afflicted by incessant showers of extremely sharp arrows from the cloud-like inimical forces, Hari twanged His excellent bow called

Verse 18.1. ŚR. gives a complimentary interpretation of the line :

*guptena hi tvayā'manda na yotsye yāhi bandhuhan /*

With you who, being the Inner controller of all beings, are beyond the ken of sight. Oh highly intelligent person ! You are the destroyer of *Avidyā* ! Be pleased to come (let me attain to you).

Śārṅga which was held in high esteem (lit. adored) by both gods and demons alike.

24. And taking out arrows from the quiver, and setting them on the bow, pulling the bow-string and discharging vollies of sharp arrows, he incessantly shattered down chariots, elephants, horses and infantry-men, whirling the bow like a fire-brand.*

* *Here VJ's Text adds the following verses* :

24.1 Then Kṛṣṇa applied to his mouth and loudly blew the conch Pāñcajanya, which, white like the moon in appearance, gave out a loud blast that spelt death to Daityas, and gave courage and comfort to Yādavas who were struck down with hosts of Kṣatriya forces.

24.2 Hearing the most defeaning terrible blast of the conch, the kings, at every point, lost courage at the terrific sound. The warriors on the Yādava side assisted by their army, raised their weapons and put down the army of opposing kings.

24.3 The Yādava warriors felt encouraged by Hari's twanging of the Śārṅga bow. They immediately rushed onwards against the enemies, discharged volleys of arrows and put to flight all the kings at the four gates.

24.4 Śiśupāla, the king of Caidya's, who bent his bow almost in a circle, challenged and threatened Kṛṣna saying, "Oh Kṛṣṇa! Stop, halt, Oh Kṛṣna."

24.5 Kṛṣṇa rushed at him showering on him innumerable sharp arrows washed with oil, from his bow which was bent practically into a circle.

24.6 Thereupon Śiśupāla, the son of Damaghoṣa, took out five terrible arrows. With four of them he hit the horses and with one the charioteer, quickly.

24.7 He quickly set ten arrows on the bow and discharged them at Kṛṣṇa, the slayer of the demon Madhu. He gave out a roar like a lion and all this happened as if like a miracle.

24.8 At that (Śiśupāla's exploit) Kṛṣṇa applauded him, crying out, "Well done ! Bravo ! Oh Śiśupāla, you are a great archer. You are a hero and a powerful one at that.

24.9-15 Now you wicked-minded fellow, see my expertness in archery by experiencing it personally." While Kṛṣna was speaking thus, all the kings simultaneously discharged and hit Kṛṣṇa with sharp arrows. Kṛṣṇa hit each of them with five shafts, dispatching the charioteer and four horses of each chariot to the abode of the god of Death. Kṛṣṇa, the delighter of the Yadus, pierced each of the kings with three arrows, on the chest, in the mouth and on the forehead, in the battle. The valiant leader of the Yadus quickly cut down the thirty bows of the thirty kings

25. The elephants fell down with their temples split up; a number of horses with their necks cut off with arrows fell down. The chariots stood with the horses, charioteer and the warrior killed and flag staff broken. The foot-soldiers had their arms, thighs and necks cut down.

26. There flowed forth hundreds of streams of blood issued from the shattered bodies of soldiers, elephants and horses which were teeming with (floating acquatic) serpent-like (hacked down) arms, rolling tortoise-like human heads, they were studded with islets of elephant-bodies and were infested with crocodiles in the from of (dead) horses.

27. Therein were hands and thighs of men like fishes, the locks of human hair like moss, bows like ripbles and weapons like bushes. The shields (or wheels) were like terrible whirl-pools and ornaments of big and costly precious stones formed the stones and sand in them.

28. By Balarāma of infinite prowess (who was) knocking down with his pestle the proud and powerful enemies in that battle, there started streams of blood which struck terror in the hearts of the cowards and inspired matrial delight and courage in the valiants.

29. Oh dear Parīkṣit ? That army impassable and terrible like an ocean of vast limitless (unfordable) expanse and directed (lit. protected) by Jarāsandha was completely annihilated. This was a supreme sportive feat of the sons of Vasudeva who were the Lords of the world.

with thirty shafts in that battle. He laughingly cut off the bow even of Śiśupāla, the son of Damaghoṣa, and with three shafts cut down the flag, his crown and the umbrella. Thereupon Kṛṣṇa, the descendant of Madhu, fitted ten Bhalla type of arrows on his Śārṅga bow. He drew the bow-strings up to the ear and hit Śiśupāla with them in the battle. The army of the *kṣatriyas* which was pierced with arrows became confounded.

24.16. The hostile army, the horses, charioteers and chariots of which were killed and destroyed, became helpless as there was nobody to save it, as if it was struck with tempestuous winds at the end of world which blows away hills, trees and creepers.

24.17. Keeping all the while the Magadhan army in view, Kṛṣṇa of ferocious valour, continued discharging arrows, blowing his conch and twanging his bow incessantly and moving it in a circle like a fire-brand, in the battle.

30. There is nothing surprising in the defeat of the hostile forces in the case of Kṛṣṇa of infinite excellence who, out of sportiveness, brings about by His will, the creation, protection and destruction of the three worlds. This is however an attempt to describe the story of the Lord who imitates the ways of the mortals.*

31. Like a lion powerfully seizing another lion, Balarāma took Jarāsandha a captive who, though extremely powerful himself, had lost his chariot and the whole of the army and was left alone alive.

32. With a view to achieve His purpose of (destroying demonic forces which would be mobilised by Jarāsandha) he forbade Jarāsandha's being bound with the nooses of Varuṇa and cords of human beings (by Balarāma) although Jarāsandha had put to death many enemies (in the past).

33-34. Released and allowed to go by Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the Protectors of the world, Jarāsandha who was highly respected by warriors, felt ashamed. He made up his mind (to retire from politics and) to perform penance. But on his way (to the forest) he was dissuaded by (his friendly) kings with expressions conveying the import of sacred texts (and quotations from *Śāstras*) as well as popular maxims and words of worldly wisdom. They convinced him by the argument:) "Your defeat by the Yadus is the consequence of the bondage of your *karma* (actions in past life)".

* *Here VJ.'s text adds* :

30.1. When all his army was annihilated and the remaining soldiers fled away, the extremely mighty Jarāsandha, alone in his chariot confronted Balarāma, the wielder of the plough (as a weapon).

30.2. Both of them were enormously big like mountains, proud like intoxicated elephants, fired with indignation and possessed of great strength. They fought with each other.

30.3. Jarāsandha who was overwhelmed with wrath, took up his heavy mace (*Gadā*) and turning it round a hundred times, hurled it at the chest of Balarāma.

30.4. Dodging the onward dashing *gadā*, big and heavy like a mountain peak, Balarāma, the wielder of a plough (as his weapon) smilingly made his attempt fruitless.

30.5. Having rendered the mace ineffective by striking it with his pestle, the wrathful Balarāma struck it against the chariot and killed his charioteer.

35. With all his army annihilated and himself slighted by the Lord by showing indifference to him, king Jarāsandha, the son of Bṛhad-ratha returned to Magadha with his heart weighed with despair and melancholy.

36. Kṛṣṇa also whose army was unscathed (as the wounds of his soldiers immediately healed with his nectarine glance and who had crossed over the ocean of the inimical forces (by crushing them), was applauded (with words "Well done ! Bravo") and was showered over with flowers by gods.

37. He returned to his capital while his victory was being celebrated in songs by the congregations of the citizens of Mathurā and bards like Sūta, Māgadha and *Bandins* whose hearts were delighted with the total disappearance of the feverish panic (caused by the siege of Mathurā).

38. As the Lord entered the capital, conches, drums, kettledrums, trumpets were loudly and incessantly sounded and lutes, flutes and *mṛdaṅgas* were every now and then played upon.

39-40. The roads of the city were sprinkled with water. The population was jubilant. The city was decorated with flags and was resonant with the recitation of the Vedas. Ornamental arches with festoons suspended were erected all over the way. (By way of worship and reception) Kṛṣṇa was showered over with flowers and tender shoots by women; curds mixed with unbroken grains of rice were applied to his forehead and he was gazed with affection by the people with their loving eyes full of joy.

41. The Lord (Kṛṣṇa) presented to Ugrasena, the king of Yadus, all the spoils of the battle, the untold treasure (left behind by the flying army) and the ornaments and jewelry of the warriors (killed and hence) lying on the battle field.*

* The *Textus ornatior* of VJ. gives a number of additional verses and chapters. This additional material has made the Kṛṣṇa legend more comprehensive and attractive. Readers are recommended to read the additional verses in the footnotes and additional chapters which are given as Appendix to this Skandha.

From verse 41 here VJ. adds three more interesting chapters describing the repeated attacks of Jarāsandha in Mathurā and the journey of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to the South (probable to find a suitable place for the Yādavas at a safe distance from Magadha) and how Kṛṣṇa killed

42. In this manner Jarāsandha, king of Magadhas mobilised every time an army of the same (twentythree) number of *Akṣauhiṇis* and fought for seventeen times (in succession) with the Yadus who were protected by Lord Kṛṣṇa.

43. (In every expedition) the Vṛṣṇis completely destroyed the whole of his army through the dint of Kṛṣṇa's spiritual power. With his forces completely slaughtered and himself allowed to escape by the enemies, king Jarāsandha returned to his capital.

44. While the eighteenth invasion was imminent, there appeared in the interval, a Yavana hero (Kālayavana) who was despatched by Nārada.[1]

45. Kālayavana (who regarded himself as) the matchless hero in this world, heard (the report from Nārada) that Vṛṣṇis were his equals in war. He invaded and laid siege to Mathurā with three crores of Mlecchas(barbarians).

46-47. Seeing him (with that vast army), Kṛṣṇa who had Balarāma as His companion, conferred (with him), "Alas ! A great calamity is bafalling Yadus on both sides (from Kālayavana and Jarāsandha. Today this *Yavana* with his vast army has completely beleaguered us. Jarāsandha, the king of Magadha also will be coming today, tomorrow or day after tomorrow.

48. If Jarāsandha, the son of Jarā, comes while both of us are engaged in fighting with this (Kālayavana), the mighty Magadhan king will massacre our clansmen or take them captive to his capital.

49. Therefore, let us construct today a fortress inaccessible to human beings (lit. bipeds) and keeping our kinsmen

Śṛgāla Vāsudeva, an ally of Jarāsandha at Karavīra (Kolhapur?). Followers of VJ.'s text are requested to read these chapters which are printed as an Appendix before reading the next (42nd) verse. That verse follows ch. 50. verse 24 in the Appendix.

1. According to VP. 5.23.6 it was in reply to the query of Kālayavana as to who is a match to him that Nārada mentioned the name of Yādavas. Nārada did not instigate him against Kṛṣṇa.

safe in that fort, we shall arrange for the killing of this Kālayavana."[1]

50. Having thus consulted with Balarāma, the Lord caused a fortress constructed in the (western) sea. In the fortress, he got built a city twelve *yojanas* (96 miles) in area and wonderful in every respect.

51. The building of the city exhibited the expertise in architecture and the skill in masonry of Tvaṣṭṛ, the architect of gods. The roads, quadrangles, streets (and residential areas) were constructed strictly in conformity to the prescribed tenets of the science of architecture (pertaining to city building).

52. In that city, gardens planted with celestial trees and creepers and wonderful parks were laid out. It was built with sky-scraping, gold-towered buildings and balconies of crystals.

53. It had barns built of silver and brass which were adorned with gold pitchers. The houses therein were of gold with jewelled domes and floors paved with gold and big emeralds.

54. It was provided with shrines with upper storeys dedicated to gods. It was thickly populated with persons belonging to the four classes of the society. It appeared beautiful with the palaces of the rulers of the Yadu clan.

55. For the sake of Hari, the great Indra transported his own assembly-hall Sudharmā and the celestial tree Pārijāta[2] resorting to which a human being is not subjected to the conditions (such as hunger, thirst, old age, death) affecting a mortal.

55-A *VJ's text adds* :

This city became a beloved resort of Lord Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa), the God of gods who resides on the milky ocean.

1. As per VP 5.23.1-4 Gārgya who was insulted by Yadus got a boon from Lord Śiva that his son (Kālayavana) would terrorise Yadus and would be invincible. To respect Śiva's boon, Kṛṣṇa did not kill him.

2. ŚR. explains this anachronism by stating that although Pārijāta was not brought at the time of building Dvārakā, the event that Kṛṣṇa brought it from Indra took place before this narration of the *Bhāgavata* by Śuka.

56. Varuṇa gifted (snow-) white horses with one black ear, swift like mind in speed.

56-A. *VJ.'s Text*

The Lord of waters presented to the God of gods one thousand such horses. Kubera, the presiding deity over treasures gave him eight treasures[1], while Guardian deities of the worlds submitted their special type of wealth to him.

56-B. *VJ.'s Text*

Similarly, guardian deities of other spheres presented him the wealth special to them.

57. When Lord Hari incarnated on the earth, Siddhas to whom all powers were given for the execution of their duties by the Lord, resubmitted all the powers etc, to him.

58. Having transferred all the people (his clansmen) there (to Dvārakā) by using his supernatural *yogic* powers and in consultation with Balarāma, the protector of the remaining population (of Mathurā), Kṛṣṇa issued out of the gates of Mathurā, wearing garland of lotuses completely unarmed.[2]

## CHAPTER FIFTYONE[3]

*Mucukunda's Eulogy of the Lord*

1-3. The Yavana (Kālayavana) perceived Śrī Kṛṣṇa coming out (of the gates of Mathurā) like the rising Moon, most beautiful to look at, dark in complexion, clad in yellow silken garment, with the *Śrī-vatsa* mark on his bosom, with his neck beautified with the pendant brilliant Kaustubha gem,

1. S.R. quotes the following list of eight treasures
   *padmas' caiva mahāpadmo matsya-kūrmau tathaudakaḥ /*
   *nīlo mukundaḥ śaṅkhaś ca nidhayo'ṣṭau prakīrtitāḥ //*
2. Here ends chapter 53 in VJ.'s text.
3. Ch. 54 in VJ.'s text.

having four mighty (knee-) long arms and eyes reddish like a fresh-blown lotus, ever beaming with joyousness, with splendid, beautiful cheeks, bright with a smile and lotus-like countenance with dazzling alligator-shaped ear-rings.

4-5. "This exquisitely beautiful man characterised by *Śrī-vasta*, four arms, lotus-like eyes and wearing a Vanamālā must be Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa). From the characteristic marks described in details by Nārada (I presume) he cannot be anyone else. But since he is armless and walking on foot, I too shall fight with him unarmed (and without using any vehicle)".

6. Resolving thus, the Yavana, with the intention of seizing him whom even the *yogin* cannot attain with difficulty, chased him who was running fast with his back towards the Yavana.

7. Showing himself to be within his grasp at every step, the king of Yavanas was taken far away to a distant mountain cave.

8. "Born as you are in the Yadu race, it is not proper for you to run away from the enemy". Reproaching him thus while pursuing, he could not overtake him (and catch hold of him) as his inauspicious *karmas* were not exhausted.

9. Even though he was thus vilified, the Lord entered a deep cave in the mountain[1]. Kālayavana also made his way into it and saw that another person was lying there asleep.

10. "Surely after luring me to such a long distance, he is (pretending to be) asleep like an innocent person." Thinking thus and regarding the sleeping man to be Kṛṣṇa, the stupid fellow kicked him

11. The man who was asleep for a long time became awakened. He slowly opened his eyes and looked in all directions and espied Kālayavana standing by his side.

1. VB. States that the cave is near Dhavalapura (Dholapur) at a distance of 10 yojanas from Mathurā. N.L. De identified it with a lake three miles to the west of Dholapur and states that on the site of the lake there was formerly a mountain—GDAM I.p. 132.

12. By the angry look of the enraged man (rudely awakened from sleep), there arose a fire out of Kālayavana's body and he was reduced to ashes in a moment.

*King Parīkṣit asked* :

13. What was the name of the man who (thus) killed the Yavana, Oh Brāhmaṇa sage ? From whom was he born ? What (extra-ordinary) prowess did he possess ? Why did he enter the cave for sleep ? What majestic lustre did he possess ?

*Śrī Śuka narrated* :

14. He was born in the race of Ikṣvākus and was a prominent son of Māndhātṛ. He was well-known by the name Mucukunda. He was friendly to Brāhmaṇas and always true to his words.

15. He was implored to ensure their protection (from demons) by the host of gods headed by Indra, as they were very much afraid of (and harassed) by Asuras. He accordingly afforded them protection for a long time.

16. Having secured (the services of) god Kārttikeya (son of Śiva) as their protector, they spoke to Mucukunda, "Oh King ! You may now retire from the onerous task[1] of protecting us.

17. Having given up your world kingdom from which all the thorns (miscreants and enemies) were wiped out by you, you have been protecting us in doing which you have given up all pleasures, Oh warrior.

18. Now none of your sons, queens, clansmen, ministers or your contemporary subjects survives as they are subjected to the influence of Time (and have died).

19. The glorious supreme immortal Lord, the Time-spirit is mightier than the mighty. He drives off all creatures easily as in a sport, as a herdsman would do his cattle.

20. May God bless you. Please ask of us any boon except the final emancipation. For the imperishable Almighty Lord Viṣṇu alone has the capability to grant it.

1. Though he was in heaven, Mucukunda was always engaged in fighting and had no respite to enjoy heavenly bliss—VJ.

21*-22. When the highly glorious king Mucukunda was thus addressed (by gods), (it is reported that) he respectfully bowed to gods[1]. He entered a cave (shown to him by gods) and reposed himself to enjoy the sleep granted to him by gods.

23. (The gods assured him) "He who would wake you up thoughtlessly while you are asleep (and thus disturb your rest), the stupid fellow be reduced to ashes the very moment he is woked at by you".

24. When the Yavana was reduced to ashes, the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa, the most prominent Sātvata manifested himself to the intelligent king Mucukunda.

25-27. He perceived the Lord, of dark-blue complexion like a cloud, wearing a yellow silken garment, with the *Śrivatsa* mark on the chest, lustrous with the refulgent *Kaustubha* gem, having four arms, appearing resplendent with the *Vanamālā* (a garland of forest flowers special to Śrī Kṛṣṇa), with a charming, kindly disposed countenance, beautified with radiant alligator-shaped ear-rings, captivating to the eyes of all human beings[1] with smiling looks expressing gracious love, endowed with youthfulness, noble in gait like a proud lion.

28. Being over-awed with his dazzling effulgence, the highly intelligent and wise king gently enquired of him as he was unapproachable due to his splendour.

*Mucukunda said*

29. "Who are you arrived here in this inaccessible mountain cave in a dense forest ? How is it that you go about in this forest full of thorns, on foot tender like lotus-petals ?

* According to Yande's (Bombay) edition.

1. *VJ.'s text adds* :

21.1 ... and he begged of them to grant him (the boon of) sleep lasting for a pretty long period inside a cave. When he was granted that boon, the noble-minded king Mucukunda being overcome with fatigue sought from them (undisturbed) sleep.

*Vṛndāvana edition adds* :

21.2. (Mucukunda requested as a boon :) 'Whoever disturbs my sleep should be instantaneously reduced to ashes, Oh most prominent gods'. The gods granted the boons saying 'Amen'.

1. v.l. enhanting to the eyes of the three worlds (VJ.)

30. You are the embodiment of majestic lustre of all those endowed with effulgence and luminosity. Are you the glorious Fire-god or the Sun-god or the Moon-god or the great Indra or the guardian deity of the world or any other divinity of that high status ?

31. I regard you as the Supreme Person, Lord Viṣṇu out of the three Gods of gods (viz. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva) as you dispel the darkness of the cave (or remove ignorance in my heart) by your splendour as does the light of a lamp.

32. Oh most excellent person ! If it pleases You, may your birth, exploits, family name be frankly disclosed to us who are sincerely desirous of hearing it (or who sincerely desire to render you service).

33. As for us we are Kṣattriyas of the Ikṣvāku race, Oh Tiger among men. I am, Oh Lord, known as Mucukunda, the son of Māndhātṛ (who was the son of Yuvanāśva).

34. Completely exhausted by vigil extending over a long period and with all the limbs of my body benumbed and over-powered with sleep, I lay enjoying un-interrupted sleep to my heart's content, from which I was rudely awakened by some unknown person, just now.

35. Even he has been reduced to ashes, verily by his own sins, indeed. It is after that your glorious personality, the destroyer of enemies, has been perceived by me.

36. Being bedazzled by your unbearable lustre, we cannot look at you for long. Our powers are ineffective in your presence, Oh blessed God. But you deserve to be honoured by all embodied beings (This much we can say about you)".

37. Thus respectfully addressed by the king, the glorious Lord, the Creator of all beings, laughed aloud and replied to him in a voice deep like the thundering of a cloud.

*The Almighty Lord replied*:

38. Dear King ! my incarnations, exploits and epithets are innumerable. They, being infinite in number, it is not possible even for me to count them.

39. Possibly someone might reckon, through (a continuous period of) many lives, all the particles of dust over the

earth, but nobody can ever enumerate my excellences, exploits, designations and incarnations.[1]

40. Even great sages (like Parāśara, Vaiśampāyana etc.) who tried to describe my descent and exploits pertaining to the past, present and future in order, have not been able to reach the end.

41. However, listen to me as I narrate those pertaining to the present time, Oh dear king. Formerly, I was entreated by god Brahmā to protect the order of righteousness and for annihilation of Asuras who caused a burden to the earth.

42. I have descended in the race of Yadus in the house of Vasudeva. As I am born of Vasudeva, they call me Vāsudeva.

43. Kālanemi, born as Kaṁsa and the haters of the righteous like Pralamba and others have been killed by me. This Yavana is caused to be burnt by me through your fiery looks.

44. Having been earnestly and repeatedly implored by you in days gone by, I, that Vāsudeva, being fond of my votaries, have come over to this cave for showering my divine Grace on you.

45. Seek boons from me, Oh royal sage. I shall bestow on you all desired objects as no person that resorts to me (submitting himself completely to my Will) shall suffer misery any more.

*Śri Śuka said*:

46. When addressed thus, Mucukunda bowed down to him. Remembering the words of Vṛddha Garga (predicting God Viṣṇu's revelation to him), he realized that he (Vāsudeva) was Lord Nārāyaṇa himself. Overwhelmed with joy, he submitted as follows:

1. Cf. *Viṣṇor nu kaṁ vīryāṇi pravocaṁ yaḥ pārthivāni vimame rajāṁsi* /—RV. 1.154.1, AV 7.26.1; VS. 5-18, TS. 1.2.13.3

*Mucukunda said*:

47. Oh Lord ! This person (i.e. I or human being) whether male or female is absolutely deluded by your Māyā (Deluding Potency). With his eye (or mind) concentrated on *saṁsāra* (*Or* being unable to realize that you alone are the Reality), he does not seek resort in you (as a devotee). For the sake of happiness, he is attached to the house including wife, children, wealth etc.) which is the source of all miseries and is thus deceived (in his search for happiness).

48. After securing the blessing of birth as a human being in this world—which, in itself, is very difficult to obtain—and that too with proportionate limbs (and soundness of mind) without any efforts (on one's part but through Divine Grace), a person who does not resort to the lotus-feet of the Lord, is, Oh handsome Lord, a wicked-minded (dull-witted) fellow who, like a beast desirous of eating grass falls into a grass-covered well (with no way out), sinks down in the dark deep well of domestic life.

49. All this life of mine has been fruitlessly wasted, Oh Invincible Almighty, for I behaved as a king elated with the pride of affluence and splendour of my royalty, identifying this mortal body as the Self and in endless anxiety due to my attachment to sons, wives, treasures, and lands.

50. Forgetting you altogether, I became incorrigibly haughty and lordly with the deep-rooted (ignorant) attachment to this inert body which is similar to an earthen pot or a wall (and thus totally different from the Soul), the inherent pride of being a god among men (king) surrounded by many military officers commanding division of chariots, elephants, cavalry-men and foot-soldiers and leading expeditions over the earth.

51. Like unto a hungry serpent, licking the corners of its mouth with its tongue, seizing upon and swallowing up a rat, you, the alert God of Death, surprisingly overtake a person who forgets you altogether, and is engrossed in pondering over the ways and means of achieving worldly plans which (even if frustrated) intensify the desire for worldly objects which (even after attainment) extremely increases the greed and thirst for them.

52. The mortal body which formerly moved in chariots plated with gold or rode on elephants and was designated (honorifically) as 'the god among men', is reduced to what may be called as excrement (if devoured after death by dogs, crows etc. in an undisposed condition), as worms (if interred in the grave) and as ashes (if cremated by fire) during the inevitable course of Time.

53. Having conquered (all kingdoms spread over the earth in) all directions, with the (possibility of future) wars forestalled, occupying the exalted imperial throne, being paid respects by his (former) equals, the man is reduced to the state of a pet (a beast for play) for women in his home which is characterized by sexual pleasures, Oh Almighty Lord.

54. Being devoted to the performance of austerities denying himself all pleasures of senses, he continues to perform righteous acts and donate gifts (in the present life) with the expectant desire, "I should become the king of heaven (Indra) or the sole sovereign ruler of the world. But this simply intensifies his thirst and is not conducive to real happiness.

55. When the time of release from the *saṁsāra* of a person wandering in the cycle of births and deaths, approaches then only companionship with saintly persons takes place, Oh Imperishable Lord. It is only after association with saints that the mind (being averse to attachment to all worldly objects turns to your devotion—you who are the Master of the high and the low.

56. That the bondage of attachment to kingship should be severed automatically (without any efforts on my part) is, Me-thinks your special divine Grace shown to me—the Grace devoutly solicited by saints of unflinching devotion to you and by kings who though they ruled over the entire earth, still wished to retire to the forest for penance.

57. Oh Omnipresent Lord ! I do not seek any other boon from you except rendering service to your feet, which is regarded as the most covetable blessing according to those who have renounced everything (and possess nothing of their own). Having propitiated you, the bestower of *Mokṣa* (Liberation), Oh Hari, what wise man would solicit a boon from you which will create a bondage to one's soul.

58. Hence, rejecting all blessings which are bound with the *guṇas* viz. *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, Oh Lord, I seek resort in you, the Supreme Person, the very embodiment of knowledge and consciousness unsullied by any taint, transcendent to all *guṇas*, the One without second.

59. For a very long time, I have been troubled in this world with fruits of action and have been afflicted with the *vāsanās* (effects left on the mind after enjoying fruits of actions) and am harrassed by six unsatiable (internal) enemies. Being unable to secure mental peace, I have with great difficulty approached your lotus-feet Oh Lord who are the Supreme Soul, free from fear and grief of death, Oh Lord ! Be pleased to protect me who am full of distress.

*The glorious Lord said*:

60. Oh Emperor of the entire world ! Oh great king, Your mind is free from impurities (like attachment, greed etc.) and judgment clear. For though you were tempted with boons (at your sweet will), you were not lured thereby.

61. It was with a view to test your unerring, vigilance that you were tempted with boons. Please know that the mind and intelligence of unflinching devotees is never changed by temptation of blessings.

62. The mind of those who are other than devotees and who control it by *Prāṇāyāma* (breath control) and other means, is not devoid of *vāsanās* (the subtle desires) and it is noticed that they are again attached to sense-objects.

63. You may roam over the earth at will after setting your mind on me. May your devotion unto me be everlasting and unflinching for ever.

64. In compliance of your duties as a Kṣattriya, you have killed living beings in hunting (fighting etc.). Expiate the sin committed by you by seeking my asylum and by meditation and performance of penance.

65. In the next birth you will be a prominent Brāhmaṇa, the best friend of all beings. Then you will certainly attain to me, the Absolute, Oh king.

## CHAPTER FIFTYTWO

*Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma escape to Dvārakā: Balarāma's marriage*

*Rukmiṇi's Letter to Kṛṣṇa*

*Śrī Śuka continued* :

1. In this way, blessed by Kṛṣṇa, Mucukunda, the descendant of Ikṣvāku, circumambulated by the right Lord Kṛṣṇa, bowed to him and came out of the cave.

2. He noticed the dimunition of stature and form in men, beasts, creepers and trees and concluding that the Kali Age[1] had set in, he went to the northerly direction.

3. Endowed with faith and penance, free from attachment and cleared of doubts, the wise king concentrated his mind on Kṛṣṇa and entered the mount Gandhamādana[2].

4. He arrived at Badarikāśrama[3], the abode of Nara and Nārāyaṇa. Undergoing conflicting pairs of conditions (such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain) with tranquillity of mind, he propitiated Lord Hari with his austerities.

5. The Lord again returned to the city of Mathurā which was still besieged by the Yavana army. He annihilated the Yavana army and carried of their wealth as spoils to Dvārakā.

6.* While the wealth was being transported on the backs of men and oxen under the direction of the Imperishable

1. VT : Though the Kali age set in after Kṛṣṇa's departure from this world, he guessed that the advent of the Kali Age was imminent.

2. A part of Rudra Himālayas in the Kailāsa range. According to *Mbh.* and *Varāha P.* Badarikāśrama is situated on this mountain.—GDAMI p. 60.

3. Badrinath in Garhawal in U.P.

* *After this verse VJ.'s text reads* :

6.1 Thereupon king Jarāsandha, fierce like the universal fire at the end of the world, deployed his forces consisting of divisions of chariots, elephants, horsemen and foot-soldiers in crocodile-like formation within the wink of the eye and he surrounded Lord Kṛṣṇa in the midst of that formation.

6.2 Grasping the situation the ferocious Kṛṣṇa hastily uprooted a tree and struck down with it the elephants, chariots and horses in that battle.

Lord, Jarāsandha, commanding an army of twentythree *akṣauhiṇīs* arrived on the scene.

7. Observing the violent onrush of inimical forces, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, the descendants of Madhu[1] adopted the human way of life and quickly began to run, Oh king.

8. Though really dauntless, they left the vast treasure (the spoils from the Yavana army) and simulating terrified cowards, they ran for many *yojanas* on foot, tender like lotus-petals.

9. Seeing both of them on the run, the powerful king of Magadhas laughed heartily and being ignorant of the deep designs and capacity of those two Lords pursued them with his army of chariots.*

6.3 Thus knocked down by Kṛṣṇa with the tree, elephants in the hostile army fell down dead on the ground like mountains struck down by Indra with his *Vajra* (Thunder-bolt).

6.4 There was left no trace of the chariots along with the occupants of the chariots, of the horses along with their riders, as if they were reduced to powder (in a grinding mill), Oh best among the Kurus.

6.5 Being infuriated, Balarāma knocked down with blows of his fist, intoxicated elephants, on the battle field, just as Indra, the King of gods, does to mountains with his thunderbolt.

6.6 The chariots (of the enemies) which were shattered down with the blows of Balarāma's fist, could not even be seen on the earth, Oh King, as they were reduced to powder like dry, withered leaves.

6.7 In the meanwhile, Jarāsandha noticed that all the wealth of the Yavana was being carried to Dvārakā and (pursuing it) and massacring the Yādavas (escorting it), seized it all. He then returned to the scene of the battle to encounter Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, Oh scion of the Kuru race.

1. *VJ.'s Text adds here* :

7.1 Noticing Jarāsandha dashing towards them with his allied princes and their armies and themselves being showered with volleys of arrows like two cubs of elephants (*kari-potakau*) driven by heavy rainshower, and themselves were without any chariots, weapons, armours and soldiers.

* *Here VJ's text adds* :

9.1 Striking back, the two warriors took rest at Karavīrapura at night. When the sun rose, the two heroes ascended the mount Gomanta.

9.2-3. Climbing up mount Gomanta which was inhabited by Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Gandharvas and Vidyādharas, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa hastily ascended its peak known as Pravarṣaṇa as clouds always shower

10. Being completely exhausted by (the strain of) running fast to such a long distance, they, however, ascended the lofty mountain peak known as Pravarṣaṇa where Indra the god of rain, always sends forth showers.

11. Surmising that they must have concealed themselves somewhere on the mountain and not being able to locate their place of hiding, they (Jarāsandha's men) set the whole mountain on fire on all sides with the fuel (the trees cut down by them during their search) strewn around.

rains there. They happily lived there subsisting on fruits and roots, Oh king.

9.4. Feeling elated and happy, Jarāsandha also pursued the two Mādhava brothers (Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma) and laid siege to the Gomanta mountain, surrounding it with his vast army.

9.5-7. He summoned his followers, the allied princes proud and irresistible in fight, such as (kings of) Kaliṅga, Kuñjarapati, the ruler of Śurāṣṭra (Kathiawar), Jayadratha the king of Sindhu (lower Sindh), Somadatta of the Kuru family, Śakuni the king of Gandhāra and Rukmi, the (crown) prince of Vidarbha, Sudakṣiṇa of Kāmboja and Virāṭa, the king of Matsyas. He commanded them to go up and fight from the east of Gomanta.

9.8-10. For scaling (and attacking) the mountain Gomanta from its southern side, Jarāsandha ordered the following kings—Drupada, the king of Pāñcālas, Damaghoṣa, the ruler of Cedis, Brahmadatta, king of Śālvas and Ekalavya, the chief of Niṣādas, Bāhlika, the foremost of Kurus and the unconquerable Yudhāmanyu, Vinda and Anuvinda of Avanti and Pauṇḍraka, the king of Kāśi.

9.11-13. To Druma, the ruler of Kimpuruṣas, Dantavaktra and his younger brother, the heroic king of Videhas and Bhūriśravas, Bṛhaccāpa, the ruler of Karuṣas and Śatadhvaja of Daśārṇa, Śaibya, the king of Suvīra (or Sauvīra, upper Sindh and Southern Punjab) and the great chariot warrior Darada,—To these King Jarāsandha of immeasurable dignity and splendour, commanded to ascend expeditiously the mount Gomanta from the west.

9.14-15. Despatching as vanguards Suśarmā of Trigarta, the mighty Veṇudārin, the immensely powerful Kulinda, the chiefs of Kekayas, Śiśupāla and the invincible monarch Bhīṣmaka, he himself quickly scaled up the mount from the northern side.

9.16. Having thus climbed mount Gomanta abounding in fruit-bearing trees of all seasons, they searched for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma everywhere below the peak Pravarṣaṇa. Not finding Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, they deforested the mount cutting down all the trees.

12. Thereupon, both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma quickly (and with great velocity) leapt from the mountain peak which is eleven *yojanas* in height and had its sides burning, and descended on the plains below (beyond the army of Jarāsandha).

13. Without being noticed by enemy and his followers, those best sons of Yadu race returned to their capital Dvārakā which is surrounded by the sea as its moat, Oh king.

14*. Falsely believing that Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa must have been burnt (in that fire), the king of Magadhas withdrew his vast army and returned to his kingdom of Magadha.

15. It has been already narrated to you by me (*vide Supra* 9.3.27-36), that Kakudmin, the son of Revata, the celebrated king of Ānarta gave his daughter Revatī in marriage to Balarāma, as per direction of god Brahmā.

16. Lord Kṛṣṇa also married Rukmiṇī, the princess of Vidarbha and the daughter of Bhīṣmaka and who was an *aṃśa* (part-manifestation) of goddess Śrī in a *svayaṁvara* ('self-choice' type of marriage where the girl elects of her own free will, her husband).

17. Like Garuḍa, the son of Kaśyapa taking away the pitcher of nectar (defeating all the gods), Kṛṣṇa carried her away defeating instantly Śālva and other kings who were partisans and allies of Śiśupāla, the king of Cedis.

*King Parikṣit enquired* :

18. It has been heard by us that the Lord married the beautiful looking Rukmiṇī, the princess of Bhīṣmaka as per *rākṣasa* form of marriage (wherein the girl is abducted per force in the teeth of opposition of relatives.)

* *After this adds VJ.'s Text* :

14.1. Having vanquished Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, the foremost among the Yādavas in the eighteenth expedition, Jarāsandha had brought under his dominion all the directions (all kingdoms on the earth) and feeling proud of it, he lived in his own kingdom, Oh king.

14.2 The noble-souled Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma (the Mādhava brothers) entered the city of Dvārakā and lived happily in the company of their highly joyous relatives and were being praised day and night by bards and songsters like *Sūta*, *Māgadha* and *Bandins*.

*End of ch.* 55*th in VJ.'s Text*

For ch. 56 in VJ.'s Text vide the Appendix.

19. I desire to hear the story of Lord Kṛṣṇa of boundless power and energy, who defeated Jarāsandha, Śālva and others and carried away the girl, Oh worshipful sage.

20. Oh Brāhmaṇa sage ! The stories of Lord Kṛṣṇa are meritorious, sweet, ever-interesting, delightful and they wipe out the sins of the world. What person who knows the importance of listening to them, will be sated at hearing them.*

*Śrī Śuka narrated*:

21. There was a great king called Bhīṣmaka, a powerful monarch of the Vidarbhas. He had five sons and only one charming looking daughter.

22. The eldest son was Rukmi. After him was born Rukmabāhu and then Rukmakeśa, Rukma-mālin and the pious Rukmiṇī was their sister.

23. Listening attentively to the glorification of Lord Kṛṣṇa's beauty, prowess, excellent virtues and affluence as sung by the visitors to her palace, she regarded him as her worthy spouse.

24. Kṛṣṇa also made up his mind to marry her as he knew her to be a suitable wife due to her intelligence, auspicious characteristics, nobility of heart, beauty, high character and other excellences.

25. In spite of all brothers being desirous of giving their sister in marriage to Kṛṣṇa, Rukmi who hated Kṛṣṇa, came in the way of it and proposed Śiśupāla, the king of Cedis.

26. Grasping the situation, the beautiful princess of Vidarbha was deeply agitated at heart. She pondered over the problem and immediately despatched a trusted Brāhmaṇa to Kṛṣṇa with the mission of bringing him.

27. Arriving at Dvārakā, he was ushered into (Kṛṣṇa's presence) by the door-attendants where he saw the First (the most ancient) Person (in the world) seated on a throne of gold.

28. Seeing him come, Lord Kṛṣṇa who was always friendly to Brāhmaṇas, got down from his throne. Offering a

* Here *Vrindāvana* edition gives the additional chapters 56 and a part of 57. These are translated in the Appendix.

(respectable) seat to the Brāhmaṇa, he worshipped him (as an honourable guest) as gods used to treat him.

29. When he had taken his meals and rested comfortably, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the final asylum of the saintly people, approached him and massaging gently his feet with his hand, he quietly enquired of the Brāhmaṇa.

30. "Oh most prominent one among great Brāhmaṇas! Is your righteous course of conduct traditionally approved by the elders, going on without any difficulty? (I hope) you are (happy with it and) contented in your heart.

31. If a Brāhmaṇa adjusts himself in contentment, with whatever he gets by chance, but does not swerve from his course of righteousness, he is like a wish-yielding cow capable of granting blessings to all the world (*or* that righteous course of conduct serves as a wish-yielding cow to him)

32. Even Indra, the king of gods, if discontented, has to wander from one world to another restlessly.[1] But a destitute person, if contented, sleeps soundly without a touch of feverish anxiety to his body and mind.

33. I bow down again and again with my head to those Brāhmaṇas who are happy with the realization of their self[2], pious and the best friends and well-wishers of all beings, free from ego, serene and self complacent.

34. Are you all happy (with a feeling of security) under your ruler, Oh Brāhmaṇa? That king is liked by me in whose country the subjects protected by him lead a happy life.

35. Please tell me the place from which you have come here crossing this (unfordable) sea and the object of seeing me. If it be no undivulgable secret, please tell us everything—what we should do for you?"

36. When such relevant queries were made courteously to the Brāhmaṇa by the Supreme Lord who had sportively assumed a human form, described to him in details (the situation which led princess Rukmiṇī to depute him to Lord Kṛṣṇa)*

1. v.l. *nāpnoti* : Even though he is the lord of gods he does not attain to higher worlds but suffers—ŚR.

2. *Or* : With what they get as a result of their destiny or *karmas*.

* Here VR.'s Text adds : (also VJ.)

36.1. I have been deputed to your presence, on best of men, by

*Rukmiṇī said in her message* :

37. Oh the most-beautiful Person in all the worlds ! Having listened to your excellent qualities which enter into the heart through (the passage of) ears and remove all the feverishness of the body and the mind, and of your excellent charms ensuring all the cherished blessings to those who possess eyes, my heart sheds all bashfulness and enters in you, Oh Immortal Lord !

38. Oh Kṛṣṇa ! Lion among men ! What wise, judicious girl of very noble descent will not seek you as a husband at the proper time—you who are the most beautiful one among all men, and one's own compeer in family, character, personal charm, knowledge, youthfulness, affluence and splendour.*

39. I have, therefore, chosen you as my lord indeed. Oh Lotus-eyed dear lord ! I have submitted my self unto you. Please do take me as your wife. Like a jackal polluting by his touch the lion's share of the prey, may not Śiśupāla, the king of Cedis come hastily and touch the hero's share (i.e. myself).

40. If the Supreme Lord, the Almighty, has been properly propitiated by me by religious deeds such as digging wells, performing sacrifices, giving donations, observance of religious rules and vows and the worship of gods, Brāhmaṇas and preceptors and such other deeds, may Lord Kṛṣṇa, the elder brother of Gada, come and marry me so that others like the son of Damaghoṣa (Śiśupāla) may not take my hands.

princess Rukmiṇī. Please listen to her message and let her prayer (and proposal) be implemented immediately there-after.

36.2. Placing the letter (written by Rukmiṇī) at his feet, he bowed down to him. The Lord of the world, with beautiful smiling eyes, took it up. The Lord, *Dharma* incarnate, read it attentively as if he was eagerly desirous to read it.

**VJ's Text adds* :

38.1. You are the glorious consort of goddess Lakṣmī, loved by Your devotees, the Supreme Controller of the Universe who are resorted to for protection by helpless people and as such also by me. Taking this into account, be pleased to grant the prayer of mine who am a servant of your lotus-like feet. Oh dearest Lord I have submitted myself to your feet.

41. Oh Invincible Lord ! May you come secretly with an army and generals to Vidarbha at the time of marriage which is to be celebrated very shortly. Defeat the armies of Caidya and Jarāsandha, the king of Magadha, and take me away as the spoil of your prowess according to the *Rākṣasa* form of marriage.[1]

42. 'How should I marry you who live in the precincts of the harem without putting your relatives to death ?' If this be the ground for hesitation, I shall suggest you an expedient. On the day preceding the marriage there is (in your family a traditional) procession to our family deity. In that, the bride to be wed goes openly to her deity.*

43. Oh Lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa ! In order to remove their personal ignorance, great-souled persons like god Śiva desire to have the dust on your lotus-like feet for covering their person as a bath. If I do not have this favour from you, I shall give up my life by starvation and other severe observance of vows so that at least after a hundred births I shall be favoured with your Grace.**

*The Brāhmaṇa said* :

44. Oh Lord of Yadus ! These are the secret words of the message that I have bought for you. Please consider what is worth doing in this (exigency of the situation), and prompt action should be taken immediately after this.

1. This form of marriage is recommended for *Kṣatriyas*.

**VJ. adds here* :

42.1 Coming over there at that time with the four divisions of army such as chariots, elephants, cavalry and infantry, and having given a sound drubbing to kings of Śālva, Magadha, Cedi and others, may the Lord of Lakṣmī take me along with my maids of honour from the temple to his own capital and have there a formal marriage celebration (lit. taking of hands).

***VJ's Text*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

43.1 Pondering over all the contents of the letter as well as the oral message of the princess, Kṛṣṇa, the slayer of demon Madhu, looked at the Brāhmaṇa (to convey his message).

## CHAPTER FIFTYTHREE

*Rukmiṇi's Marriage : Rukmiṇi carried away by Kṛṣṇa.*

*Śri Śuka said* :

1. Hearing the message of Rukmiṇī, the princess of Vidarbha, Kṛṣṇa, the delight of Yadus, clasped the hand of the Brāhmaṇa and laughing heartily, he spoke to him.

*The Lord said* :

1 A. *VR.'s Text adds* :

Just as the most beautiful Rukmiṇī has ever fixed her heart on Me.

2. So also I too have set My heart on her. Hence I do not get any sleep at night. I know that it is due to Rukmin's hatred against me that my marriage with her is obstructed by him.

3. As one would capture a flame after churning the fuel, I will vanquish those wretched kings in a battle and take away (as prize) that faultlessly beautiful princess who is so devoted to me.

*Śri Śuka narrated* :

4. Having ascertained (from the Brāhmaṇa) the constellation under which Rukmiṇī's marriage was to take place (viz. day after tomorrow at night, Kṛṣṇa, the slayer of the demon Madhu ordered his charioteer Dāruka to get his chariot ready forthwith.

5. Dāruka instantly brought up the chariot drawn by (the famous horses) Śaibya, Sugrīva, Meghapuṣpa and Balāhaka and stood before him with folded palms.

6. Taking up the Brāhmaṇa with him, Kṛṣṇa, mounted the chariot and with those swift horses (yoked to the chariot) he travelled from Ānarta[1] to Vidarbha within one night.

7. Due to his weakness of being over-affectionate to his

1. Gujarat and a part of Malwa with Kuśasthalī or Dvārakā as the capital—GDAMI p. 7.

son, the king of Kuṇḍina caused all the auspicious rites connected with marriage-ceremony, with a view to give his daughter to Śiśupāla.

8-9. The city had all its streets, roads and quadrangles profusely sprinkled with water. It was decorated with banners of various kinds and buntings and arches. It was crowded by men and women who were wearing garlands of flowers, fragrant ointments and dressed themselves with immaculate clothes. They perfumed their mansions with the fumes of aloe wood (*Aguru*) smoke.

10. Having worshipped the manes, gods and Brāhmaṇas with due formalities and giving them a heavy feast he caused the auspicious verses recited according to formalities (to bless the bride).

11. The bride of beautiful teeth who had taken a bath and had gone through the formal auspicious preliminaries (such as wearing an auspicious thread woven with a piece of gold) was clothed in a pair of brand-new silken pieces and was beautified with excellent ornaments.

12. For the protection of the bride (from evil influences), the most prominent Brāhmaṇas pronounced *mantras* from the Sāmaveda, the Ṛg-Veda and the Yajur-Veda. The family-priest of the king who was expert in the Atharva-Veda offered oblations to fire for the appeasement of evil stars (and the prosperity of the house).

13. The king who was prominent among those who were well versed in Śāstric prescriptions gave as gift to Brāhmaṇas gold. silver, clothes and sesamum seeds mixed with raw sugar and cows as well.

14. In the same way king Damaghoṣa, the ruler of Cedis, caused all the religious formalities conducive to the good of his son, by Brāhmaṇas who were expert in *mantras*.

15. Accompanied with regiments of elephants exuding ichor, chariots decorated with garlands of gold and with armies of cavalry and infantry, he came to the city of Kuṇḍina.

16. The king of Vidarbhas went out to receive him and worshipped him with all the formalities with a gladsome heart. He lodged him in a separated mansion which was reserved for that purpose.

17. There came thousands of kings who were the allies of Śiśupāla such as Śālva, Jarāsandha, Dantavaktra, Vidūratha, Pauṇḍraka and others.

18-19 All those enemies of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma determined to see to it that the bride was secured for Śiśupāla. They decided among themselves, "In case Kṛṣṇa accompanied by Balarāma and other Yadus comes and tries to carry away the bride, we shall jointly put up a fight with him." Having made up their minds thus, all the kings came with all their forces and vehicles there.

20-21. Hearing the report of military preparations of the hostile kings, the glorious Balarāma who came to know of Kṛṣṇa's having gone alone to carry away the bride, apprehended a fight, and taking with him a very big army consisting of elephants, horsemen, chariots and foot-soldiers quickly rushed to Kuṇḍina, as he was overcome with brotherly affection.

22. The beautiful daughter of king Bhīṣmaka who was yearning for the arrival of Lord Hari and not seeing (any chances) of the return of the deputed Brāhmaṇa, began to think as follows :

23. "Alas ! Only one night has remained for the celebration of the marriage. I am afraid I am unfortunate with little merit (to my credit). The Lotus-eyed Lord has not come as yet, nor do I know its reason. The Brāhmaṇa who was my emissary with that message, has also not returned as yet.

24. Is it that the noble-souled Lord who made preparations for coming here has seen something censurable in me and hence does not come for the acceptauce of my hand ?

25. To me who am unfortunate, neither god Brahmā nor god Śiva is favourable and the fair goddess Pārvatī the spouse of god Śiva, that chaste daughter of Himālayas too seems to be averse to me."

26. While the girl whose mind was thus fixed on Lord Kṛṣṇa (as if carried away by him) was pondering thus, her eyes were bedimmed with tears. But as she knew what was proper for that particular time (viz. not shedding tears), she closed her eyes.

27. In this way, of the bride who was eagerly waiting for the coming of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the left thigh, arm, and eye began to throb indicating thereby auspicious and happy news.

28. That very excellent Brāhmaṇa who was directed by Kṛṣṇa (after his arrival in the park near Kuṇḍina) saw the glorious princess in the harem.

29. Seeing his cheerful countenance and gait with confident steps (indicating a success of his mission) the virtuous girl who was expert in guessing the indications, asked him with a broad smile.

30. He informed her that Kṛṣṇa, the delight of Yadus had arrived and assured her of his definite promise of taking her away (*supra* verse 3) and that he was brought in his chariot by Kṛṣṇa Himself.

31. Knowing definitely that he (Kṛṣṇa) had arrived (at Kuṇḍinapura), the princess of Vidarbha was over-joyed at heart. (In her exultation) she could not decide what gift or boon be conferred on the Brāhmaṇa for his highly valuable service. And she simply bowed down to him[1] (and later paid him sumptuously).

32. Learning that both Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa had arrived out of curiosity to witness the celebration of his daughter's marriage, king Bhīṣmaka went forth to receive them with a flourish of trumpets, taking with him proper articles of worship and presents.

33. (Being highly intelligent, he guessed that Kṛṣṇa had arrived for marrying his daughter for which he was quite willing). So he worshipped Kṛṣṇa with due formalities suitable after the arrival of the bridegroom and he brought *Madhuparka* (a preparation of honey and curds—a customary offer to a bridegroom after arrival on the eve of the marriage ceremony), excellent (lit. well-washed) garments and other desirable presents (of various kinds) and worshipped them as enjoined in scriptures.

1. ŚR. : *Or* : Rukmiṇī was an incarnation of Lakṣmī, the goddess of wealth. All people who pay respects to her are bestowed with all kinds of wealth. She decided, "When I, Lakṣmī, pay respects to this Brāhmaṇa, he will automatically become more affluent than all others."

34. The high-minded monarch arranged for a spacious, luxurious accommodation for them.

3-4A. *VJ's Text* :

It was quite spacious and suitable for them but in a garden on the outskirts of Kuṇḍinapura, as the city was overcrowded with kings like Jarāsandha and others.[1]

34. ... He also arranged for the hospitable reception of Kṛṣṇa's followers and army, in a proper manner.

35. In this way, he received all other kings who arrived there, each according to his prowess, age, military power and affluence, catering to them all that they desired.

36. Hearing that Kṛṣṇa had arrived, the citizens of Kuṇḍinapura came to see him and (as it were) drank (to their heart's c ntent the honey of beauty) of his lotus-face with both their eyes as if they were the joined palms for drinking).

37. (They spoke amongst themselves) : 'Only Rukmiṇī and no other girl deserves to be his consort, and he alone of faultlessly beautiful personality is the suitable consort for Rukmiṇī, the daughter of Bhīṣma.

38. May the Lord, the creator of the three worlds, be pleased with whatever little merit we possess and as his grace (showered on us) may the imperishable Lord Kṛṣṇa accept the hand of the princess of Vidarbha."

39. While the citizens who were attached to Rukmiṇī by bonds of affection, were speaking thus with one another, the bride, guarded by soldiers, started from the harem to the shrine of Ambikā (goddess Pārvatī).

40. Deeply contemplating on the lotus-feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, she went on foot to see and worship the foliage-like tender feet of goddess Bhavānī.

40-A *VJ's. Text adds* :

Kṛṣṇa, the delight of Yādavas went there in the company of some selected followers.

41. The bride observed silence; she was accompanied by her mothers and was surrounded by her friends (maids of

1. Probably to avoid an outbreak of conflict if the two inimical camps are accommodated in the town.

honour). She was protected by the valiant royal guards clad in coats of mail and alert with their weapons uplifted.

41-A. *VJ's Text* :

And she was surrounded by aged chamberlains (eunuchs) with canes indicating their office, *Mṛdaṅgas*, conchs, drums, trumpets and kettle-drums were sounded (during the procession.)

42. She was accompanied by thousands of prominent courtesans carrying with them a variety of offerings and articles of worship and by Brāhmaṇa women (whose husbands were alive) tastefully adorned with garlands of flowers, perfumes (or sandal paste) excellent garments and ornaments.

43. Songsters singing songs and musicians playing on their instruments as well as bards and panegyrists like *Sūta*, *Māgadha* and *Bandins* surrounded the bride glorifying her in songs.

44. Arriving at the shrine of the goddess[1], she washed her lotus-like hands and feet. Purifying herself with sipping the water thrice as *ācamana*, she entered with a serene mind in the inner apartment—into the presence of the goddess Pārvatī.

45. Aged Brāhmaṇa ladies who were well-versed in the (pre-marital) rituals, guided the bride in the worship and paying respects to the goddess Pārvatī, the Consort of Śiva, along with god Śiva as well.

46. (Rukmiṇī prayed :) I constantly pay my respects to you Oh auspicious[2] Mother goddess, along with your children (Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya). May Lord Kṛṣṇa become my consort. May this prayer of mine be granted.

47. She worshipped the goddess Pārvatī in several ways by sprinkling her with water, applying sandal-paste and unbroken rice-grains, varieties of incense, with (a rich variety of) clothes, garlands of flowers, ornaments, various kinds of articles of worship and offerings (variety of edibles) and with rows of lights (waving them round her).

1. VR.'s *v.l.*—she entered the shrine of the goddess.

2. *Śivā*—implies respects to Lord Śiva with whom she (the goddess) shares the name and person.

48. With similar articles she worshipped Brāhmaṇa women *Suvāsinis*—(whose husbands are alive) in the same way, offering them salt, *apūpa* (fried cakes), betel leaves, *maṅgalasūtra* (the sacred thread to be worn round the neck by *Suvāsinis*), fruits (of various kinds) and (pieces of) sugarcane.

49. The Brāhmaṇa ladies gave her some part (of what she offered as worship to the goddess Ambikā) and gave their blessings (in addition) along with them. Rukmiṇī bowed down to them and and to the queen-mother and accepted the things offered to her (as *prasāda*).

50. Completing (the observance of) the vow of silence she came out of the temple of Ambikā[1], clasping the hand of her servant (nurse) with her own hand resplendent with rings of precious stones.

51-53. The glorious warriors who assembled there found themselves tormented with the passion of love and became perplexed at seeing her, who like the deluding potency (Māyā) of the Lord, was enchanting to the warriors, with her beautiful slender waist, and countenance beautified with the earrings; she was sixteen years of age[2], wore a girdle of precious stones around her waist: had protruding breasts (showing attainment of womanhood); her eyes were unsteady, appearing as if afraid of her over-hanging locks of hair. Beaming with bright smile, her white jasmine-bud like teeth appeared reddish as they were tinged with the splendour of her red lips-red like the *Bimba* fruit. Her gait was like that of a royal swan and her feet were radiant with the splendour of jingling anklets.

54. Hypnotized on seeing Rukmiṇī who under the pretex of the religious pilgrimage (to the shrine of the goddess), had come to offer her beauty to Lord Hari, the kings whose

1. *VJ.'s Text adds*

50.1 Nearby was the shrine of Indra and (his consort) Śacī who were the family deities of the royal house of Vidarbha.

50.2 Rukmiṇī entered (the inner part of the shrine) in the presence of Śacī, the beloved of the lord of gods. She bowed to the feet of Śacī whose lotus-feet were not worshipped by her for a pretty long time. Then she issued out of that temple with many umbrellas being held over her and fanned by waving of a number of *chowries*.

2. *Śyāmā*—who had not attained puberty—ŚR., VR.

hearts were captivated by her sublime smile and bashful looks, dropped down their weapons (without being aware of it), and fell senseless on the ground even though they were mounted on elephants, chariots and horses.

55. At that time, she was eagerly awaiting the arrival of the Lord and hence was slowly moving (her feet resembling) a pair of lotus-buds. Removing aside her hair flowing over her eyes with her fingers, she cast bashful side-glances to have an over-view of the kings that assembled there. And Lo ! she noticed him there.

56. Even while the enemies were looking on, Kṛṣṇa snatched away the princess who was desirous of ascending his chariot; he seated her in his chariot with the ensign of Garuḍa (emblem of Garuda on the flag) setting at nought the whole lot of Kṣattriyas assembled there. Kṛṣṇa, the Consort of Lakṣmī, then slowly (and fearlessly) departed from the place (to Dvārakā) with his forces headed by Balarāma, like a lion seizing his own share of prey from the midst of a pack of jackals.

57*. Other proud kings under the leadership of Jarāsandha did not tolerate this discomfiture and loss of reputation (by Kṛṣṇa's carrying away Rukmiṇī in the teeth of their opposition). They exclaimed : "Fie upon us who, although armed with bows, have been deprived of our reputation and glory by cowherds just as the lions are deprived of their kingly position by the deer."

## CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR

*Celebration of Rukmiṇi's Marriage*

*Śrī Śuka said:*

1. With these self-condemning words, all the highly indignant kings put on their coats of mail and mounting their own vehicles and surrounded by their respective armies hotly pursued Kṛṣṇa, equipped with bows in their hands.

* This is the Ist verse of the next chapter in VJ.

2. Beholding the on-rushing kings in pursuit, the generals of the Yādava army stood their ground to confront them, twanging their bows, Oh king.

3. Veterans of war (like Jarāsandha) who were riding on horse-back, the shoulders of elephants and seats in the chariots discharged volleys of arrows like innumerable clouds pouring showers of water on mountains.

4. Finding her consort's force covered with showers of arrows, the slender-waisted bride with her eyes agitated with fear looked at her Lord's face bashfully.

5. Laughing out that fear, the Lord assured her: "Don't be afraid, Oh fair-eyed maiden ! The inimical forces will be liquidated in no time by your soldiers".

6. Not tolerating that prowess of the enemies, (the leaders of the Yādava army like) Gada, Balarāma and others shot down the horses, elephants and chariots (of the enemy) with their steel-arrows (*nārāca*).

7. And rolled down on the ground crores of heads of the occupants of chariots, horsemen and elephant-riders—all ornamented with ear-rings, crowns and head-gears.

8. And fell down on the grounds, their hands wielding swords, maces (*gadās*) and bows, and also fore-arms, thighs, feet, as well as the heads of horses, mules, elephants, camels, donkeys and (infantry-) men.

9. As their armies were thus being drubbed and slain by Vṛṣṇis ambitious of victory, the kings led by Jarāsandha turned back and fled away (from the battle field).

10. They all approached Śiśupāla who was gloomy, dispirited and with parched-up mouth, grieving as if his legally married wife was abducted.

*The kings consoled him*:

11. "Oh tiger among men ! Give up this despondency. In the case of embodied beings, pleasure or pain is never observed to be his permanent lot.

12. Just as a wooden doll dances according to the will of the showman (controlling it), the same way, due to his being controlled by God, the embodied being endeavours to pass through pleasure or pain.

13. Though backed by an army of twenty-three *akṣauhiṇis*, (every time) I suffered defeat at the hands of Kṛṣṇa in seventeen expeditions. But ultimately I was victorious in one (the last) battle.

14. I, however, do not feel aggrieved or elated by anything (defeat or victory) as I know that the world is controlled by time in combination with Providence.

15. Leaders of the army-commanders as we are, on this occasion also we were defeated by the small contingent of Yādavas under the protection of Kṛṣṇa.

16. The enemies became victorious this time as Time was favourable to them. We too shall vanquish them when the Time will be propitious to us."

*Śri Śuka said*:

17. Thus consoled with enlightenment by his friends, Śiśupāla returned to his capital along with his followers, while the other allied kings who survived that battle went back to their respective cities.

18. The mighty prince Rukmī who hated Kṛṣṇa, could not tolerate the idea of his sister being married to Kṛṣṇa according to the *rākṣasa* from of marriage and with an army of one *akṣauhiṇi*, he hotly pursued Kṛṣṇa.

19. The mighty-armed, impetuous, determined Rukmī, clad in armour and armed with a bow, in his high indignation, took the vow in the hearing of all princes (before they departed).

20. "Upon my word I hereby solemnly declare that I shall not enter Kuṇḍinapura unless (and until) I bring back Rukmiṇī after killing Kṛṣṇa in the battle."

21. Announcing this, he mounted his chariot and commanded his charioteer: "Quickly drive the horses to the spot where Kṛṣṇa is, so that I shall have an encounter with him.

22. Today with my sharp arrows I shall vanquish the pride of valour of that cowherd (or: the protector of the Vedas), the most wicked-minded fellow (or: one who is gracious unto the wicked as well who has abducted per force my sister".

23. Not knowing the extent of (the infinite) power of the Lord, Rukmī, the wicked braggart pursued alone in a chariot and shouted out the words, 'Stop', 'stop' to Kṛṣṇa who (also) was driving alone in his chariot.

23A. He overtook Kṛṣṇa while he was crossing the divine river Narmadā. Being fully prepared for a fight, he repeatedly shouted out at him to stop.

24. With all the force at his command, he bent the bow (by drawing the bowstring) and hit Kṛṣṇa with three arrows and roared: "Wait minute here (Oh thief! My enemy), the disgrace to Yadu's family[1].

25. Where are you going clandestinely kidnapping my sister like a crow[2] stealthily picking up sacrificial oblation? I shall today subdue your pride, you dullard[3] who are a cheat and adopt crooked stratagems in fighting.

26. Surrender my younger sister (lit. a young girl) before you are not lying (in the dust) struck down by my arrows."[4] Smilingly Kṛṣṇa cut down Rukmī's bow and wounded him with six arrows.

27. He struck his four horses with eight shafts, the charioteer with two and his flag with three. Taking up another bow, Rukmī pierced Kṛṣṇa with five arrows.

28. Struck by the stream of arrows, the imperishable Lord Kṛṣṇa sundered Rukmī's bow. He again equipped himself with (still) another bow which too the Lord snapped.

29. Kṛṣṇa cut into splinters whatever weapon—whether a club studded with iron, spear, pike, sword and shield, lance and iron club—Rukmī took up (one after another).

30. Jumping down from his chariot with a sword in hand, the indignant Rukmī, determined to finish with Kṛṣṇa, rushed at him like unto a moth dashing at a fire.

1. As usual ŚR treats this as a compliment explaining the pun in *yadūnāṁ kulapāṁsana* as *yadūnāṁ kulapa, aṁsana*—"you Protector of Yadu's race, expert in destroying enemies".

2. ŚR takes *muṣitvā dhvāṁkṣa* as *adhvāṁkṣa* and interpretes "Like god Indra taking away his legitimate sacrificial oblations"

3. *manda*—stable, immovable—ŚR.

4. 26.A—*VJ.'s Text adds* :

Bending the bow by drawing the bow-string powerfully, he hit Kṛṣṇa with three arrows.

31. As he was advancing, Kṛṣṇa cut down his sword and shield into sesamum-like particles with his arrows and taking up his sharp sword, he rushed forth bent on killing Rukmī.

32. Beholding his attempt to kill her brother, the virtuous Rukmiṇī was overwhelmed with fear. Falling at the feet of her consort, she piteously[1] entreated:

(*VJ.'s Text*: *Rukmiṇī prayed*)

33. "Oh lord of Yoga of incomprehensible nature ! Oh God of gods ! The Protector of the world ! Oh embodiment of auspiciousness ! It does not behove you to kill my brother, Oh mighty-armed Lord.

*Śrī Śuka said*:

*VJ's Text*:

33-A. Praying him thus in frightened tones, the poor Rukmiṇī earnestly desiring to save her brother, clasped the feet of Kṛṣṇa, the Protector of the world.

34. The merciful Lord gave up his attempt (on Rukmī's life) as his feet were clasped by Rukmiṇī whose whole person was trembling with fear, whose mouth was parched up with grief, whose throat was choked (with emotions) and whose gold necklace was fallen, out of nervous anxiety.

35. Binding that evil-doer with a piece of cloth, he disfigured him by shaving his head (with the blade of his sword) keeping (intermittently) some part of the mustaches and hairlocks on the head. In the meanwhile, prominent heroes in the Yādava forces crushed and routed the extraordinary hostile forces, like elephants trampling down stalks of lotuses.

36. When they approached to the presence of Kṛṣṇa, they beheld Rukmī reduced to that (humiliating) plight, as good as dead (through shame). The mighty Lord Balarāma was moved with pity and releasing him, he protested to Kṛṣṇa.

(*VJ's Text*: *Balarāma reproved*:)

37. "This blame-worthy act, abhorrent to us (our race), has been perpetrated by you, Oh Kṛṣṇa, in shaving the mous-

1. v.l. *paṇḍitā*—omniscient—(VT)

taches and the locks of hair of a relative. Disfiguring a relative this way amounts to killing him.

38. (Addressing Rukmiṇī): In your grief and brooding over this deformity of your brother, please do not scorn us (as evil-minded people) Oh good lady. No other person is the giver of (i.e. responsible for) the pleaure or pain that comes to one's lot; for a person reaps the fruits of his own actions.

39. Even if a relative has committed an offence deserving death in retribution, he should not be killed by a relative. He should be discharged forthwith. What is the propriety of slaying a person again, when he stands killed by his own sinful acts.

40. God Brahmā has ordained this as the *dharma* (the code of conduct) for Kṣattriyas that even a brother should kill a brother (in the battle). What could be more terrible than this ? (Hence it is the *kṣattriya dharma* that is at fault and not we who abide by it, Oh lady).

41. (Turning to Kṛṣṇa) It is only the proud, blinded with the intoxicating influence of prosperity that offend relatives for the sake of kingdom, land, wealth woman, honour, authority or for any such consideration.

42. (Addressing Rukmiṇī) : It is an improper lookout on your part that you, like an ignorant person, think auspiciously and well of your brother who always bears ill-will towards all beings and ill of those who are your well-wishers[1].

43. "That some persons are friends, some enemies and some indifferent is the self-delusion created by Lord's *Māyā* (deluding potency) among persons who regard the body and the soul as identical.

44. For the Supreme Soul is one only in all corporeal beings. But he is mistaken as many by the ignorant, just as the luminary (the sun, though one, is regarded as many when it is reflected in different vessels containing water) or the sky (though one, is regarded as different when circumscribed in a

1. *ŚR* adds : It is certainly your improper outlook that you regard the auspicious or proper punishment meted out to your brother (by shaving him) as evil, even though your relative is ill-disposed to all beings.

pitcher (*ghaṭākāśa*) or within a room (*maṭhākāśa*) is looked upon as many (when in reality it is one).

45. This body constituted as it is of five material elements (like the earth, water, fire and others), vital elements (like sense-organs and their presiding deities) and the *guṇas*[1] and has a beginning and an end, is projected on the Soul (*ātman*) through ignorance (*avidyā*) which makes the embodied soul wander in the cycle of *saṁsāra*[2].

46. The soul has no union with or disunion from anything else (viz. the body), as nothing other than the soul exists at all, Oh good lady. The soul is the cause of such appearance, just as the sun is the cause of the perception of the sun by means of the eye and colour (but the sun bears no union or disunion with them)[3].

47. Changes such as birth (youth, death) and others pertain to the body and never to the soul, just as the waxing and the waning of the moon are attributable to the digits of the moon (which remains constant all the while). The death of the body is like the *amāvasyā* (*kuhū*) when the light of the moon disappears but the moon remains unaffected (in the same way the soul continues to exist despite the disappearance of the body).

48. Just as a sleeping man, in a dream, perceives himself, the sense objects of enjoyment and experiences the fruit (enjoyment) thereof, even though nothing of these exists in reality, similarly an ignorant person undergoes (the experience of this unreal) *saṁsāra*.

1. ŚR: and is thus conditioned by the triad—*ādhibhautika*, *ādhyātmika* and *ādhidaivika*.

2. ŚR. : The body is not pure due to conditioning circumstances.

3. (i) It is the power ofillumination of the sun which shines all the while and has no contact with the eye and as such has neither union or disunion with the eye. Similarly, the Soul being of the nature of consciousness and existing in the past, present and future has no possibility of union or disunion with the body—VT.

(ii) The Supreme Soul is not bound or separated from the body coming into existence of which is dependent on Him, just as the Sun is unconnected with the eye or the colour, both of which depend on the sun for their function—VR.

49. Therefore, by means of the knowledge of reality eliminate completely your sorrow which is born of ignorance and which causes you pining and delusion. And be comforted and serene at heart, Oh lady, with bright smiles."

*Śri Śuka said* :

50. When the beautifully slim lady was thus enlightened by the glorious Lord Balarāma, she overcame her mental depression and attained equipoise of her mind through reason.

51. Allowed to get away with life only, shorn of his power (or army) as well as of glory, brooding over his disfigurement and with his plans and ambitions frustrated, Rukmī built a big town called Bhojakaṭa[1] for his residence.

52. He resided there through indignation, as he formerly announced. "I shall not re-enter Kuṇḍina unless and until I have killed the wicked-minded Kṛṣṇa and brought back my younger sister".

53. Having vanquished all the monarchs in his way, the Lord brought Rukmiṇī, the daughter of Bhīṣmaka to his city, Dvārakā and married her as per *Śāstric* injunction, Oh Scion of the Kuru race.

54. There was a great festivity in every house in Dvārakā, the capital of Yadus, of the residents thereof, who were exclusively devoted to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the protector of Yadus, Oh king.

55. Men and women thereof were highly delighted. Adorned with ear-rings of highly polished jewels, they presented valuable gifts to the newly-wedded couple wearing excellent bridal dress.

56. The city of Vṛṣṇis (Dvārakā) shone splendidly with flags raised in honour of Indra, with a wonderful variety of garlands, cloths and ornamental arches decorated with jewels, provided with auspicious arrangement at every door of pitchers

1. *Bhojakaṭa* or *Bhojapur* is identified with Bhojapura, six miles to the south-east of Vidiśā. GDAMI 33. It was built to the north of the Narmadā as per *purāṇas* which thus support this identification. GDAMI 33 and 224.

full of water, insense of the *aguru* (agall ochum)burning and lamps.

57. Its streets were besprinkled with the exuded ichor (temporal fluid) of elephants of the great kings invited for the marriage, and entrances beautified with tall plantain trees and areca-nut trees.

58. Moving hastily here and there in confusion in that marriage, clansmen of Kurus, Sṛñjayas, Kaikeyas, Vidarbhas, Yadus and Kuntīs were happy to meet each other.

59. Hearing the episode of Kṛṣṇa's carrying away Rukmiṇī sung by the people everywhere, kings and princesses who attended the marriage became extremely wonder-struck.

60. Great was the exultation among the citizens of Dvārakā, Oh king, to see Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of goddess Śrī now married to Rukmiṇī who was no other than goddess Lakṣmī herself.

## CHAPTER FIFTY FIVE

*The Story of Pradyumna's Birth*[1]

*Śri Śuka narrated*:

1. As to Kāma[2], the god of Love, who was a portion of (the future) Lord Vāsudeva, was formerly burnt down through the wrath of god Śiva. Hence he (Kāma) resorted to him again for the restoration of his corporeal form.

* Ekanātha has written an excellent work in ovī metre on Rukmiṇī's marriage. Out of respect for Ekanātha, KD has incorporated it in his com. on this skandha (Harivaradā)

1. As SR and VR point out this chapter contains a chronological anamoly as it describes slaying of the demon Śambara by Pradyumna and his return to Dvārakā alongwith his wife Māyāvatī—incidents which took place long after Kṛṣṇa's marriages with Jāmbavatī, Satyabhāmā and others which are described in the subsequent chapters.

2. This refers to the incident when at the behest of god Indra, Kāma, disturbed god Śiva's spiritual concentration, with a view to tempt him to marry Umā and get rid of the menace of the demon Tāraka by procreating a son (the future Skanda). But contrary to expectations, Śiva flared

2. That very god of Love was born of Rukmiṇī, the princess of Vidarbha, and (lit. from the semen of) Kṛṣṇa. He became celebrated as Pradyumna and was in no way inferior to his father (Kṛṣṇa) in any respects.

3. Knowing that the babe was his future enemy (slayer), the demon Śambara, the inveterate enemy of Kāma, who could assume any form at will, clandestinely kidnapped it even when it had not completed ten days (on the sixth-day)[1] and throwing it into the sea, he went home.

4. A huge powerful fish swallowed that babe. But along with others, that fish was caught into a big net by fishermen.

5. The fishermen brought it as a present to Śambara. The cooks carried it to the kitchen and cut that wonderful fish with a knife.

6. Finding a babe in its abdomen, they offered it into the charge of Māyāvatī[2]. As her mind was full of misgivings (about the child), the divine sage Nārada narrated to her all the details how it was born and how it was found in the bowels of that fish.

7. It is reported that she was Rati, the glorious wife of the god Kāma, waiting for the reincarnation of her consort whose body had been reduced to ashes.

up with anger at this disturbance and opened his Third eye—the fire out of which reduced Kāma to ashes (*Vāl. Rām.Bāla* 23.10-13). VT. and VR. argue that Pradyumna, the Third emanation (*Vyūha*) of the *Pāñcarātra* school is indestructible. VT. finds a *via media* by assuming two sets of deities—the ordinary—*Prākṛta* set to which category Kāma, the servant of Indra who tried to disturb Siva and got consumed by fire, belonged. The other set, viz. the four manifestations (*Vyūhas*) of Nārāyaṇa of which Pradyumna forms the third, is not implied here. The word—*tu* in the text *Kāmas tu* signified this distinction between the two categories, and emphasizes that it was the *Prākṛta kāma*, the *jīva* of whom sought birth from Kṛṣṇa.

1. *ṣaṣṭhe 'hni jātamātraṁ tu Pradyumnaṁ sūtikāgṛhāt/*
*mamaiṣa hanteti mune hṛtavān kāla-Śambaraḥ //*

VP. 5.27.3.

2. As explained below (VT) and in VP. 5.27.27ff., she was Rati, the wife of Kāma who was reduced to ashes by Śiva. Under the pseudonym Māyāvatī, she worked as the kitchen-in-charge of Śambara waiting for her re-union with her husband in his next birth.

8. She was entrusted with the charge of supervision (of the cooking of pulses and rice) in Śambara's kitchen. Having come to know that the child was her spouse Kāmadeva himself, she developed affection to that child[1].

9. Not long afterwards[2] Pradyumna, the son of Kṛṣṇa, attained youth and caused confusion in the heart of women who had a look of him.

10. Considering him as her husband, Rati was ogling at him with bashful smiles and raised evebrows aud approached with amorous purpose Pradyumna who with eyes longish like lotus-petals and knee-long arms was the most beautiful man in the world.

11. The respectable son of Kṛṣṇa (strongly) protested: "Oh mother ! You seem to have a perverted mind. Abandoning the motherly relation, you behave like a lustful woman."

*Rati replied* :

12. "Your honour is the son of Lord Kṛṣṇa taken away by the demon Śambara from (the lying-in-chamber in) your house. I am Rati, your (lawfully) married wife and you are (none else but) Kāma, the god of Love, my Lord.

13. This demon Śambara cast you into the sea when you were not even ten days old. A fish swallowed you up. It is from the bowels of the fish that your honour came out here, my lord.

14. This enemy of yours is irresistible and invincible as he is expert in hundred types of black magic (*māyā*). You, however, slay him by means of *māyā* powers like *mohana* (stupefaction) and others.

15. Being deprived of her child, your mother is wailing like a female osprey at the loss of her young one. Being overwhelmed with motherly affection for a child, she is anxious and miserable like a cow bereaved of her calf."

1. v.l.—noted in VT : 'Due to her Māyā power, even Śambara could not know the child'.

2. According to HV, Pradyumna's growth was wonderfully accelerated with specific medicines, etc.

16. Exhorting him thus, Rati, the past-master in deluding magical processes (*māyāvatī*), imparted to the noble-souled Pradyumna the knowledge of 'Supreme Illusion' (*Mahāmāyā*), capable of destroying all sorts of spells and magical processes and illusions.

17. Approaching Śambara, he challenged him for a fight, provoking a quarrel by insulting him with unbearable taunts.

18. Reproached with sharp words of abuse, Śambara, like a serpent trodden under foot, rushed out with a mace in hand and eyes reddened with indignation.

19. Vehemently whirling his mace, he hurled it at the noble-souled Pradyumna and gave out a roar, terrible like the stroke of a thunderbolt.

20. The glorious lord Pradyumna struck back the oncoming mace with his own and flying in rage, he dashed his own mace at the enemy, Oh king.

21. Resorting to the illusory method of warfare of Daityas as taught by Maya, the Asura, taking up a position in the sky, discharged on Pradyumna, the son of Kṛṣṇa, a shower of missiles.

22. Being troubled with the down-pour of missiles Pradyumna, the powerful hero, the son of Rukmiṇī, employed his Great Lore consisting of pure *sattva* which was capable of counteracting and annihilating all *Māyās* (illusive processes, spells, etc.)

23. Thereupon, the *daitya* (Śambara) used hundreds of magical spells (*māyās*) used by Guhyakas, Gandharvas, Piśācas (goblins), Nāgas and Rākṣasas but the son of Kṛṣṇa simply blew them out (i.e. easily destroyed them).

24. Raising his sharp-edged sword, he forcibly severed from Śambara's trunk his head with its copper-coloured beard (and moustaches) and adorned with a crown and earrings.

25. Showered over with heaps of flowers by the celestials who were eulogising him, Pradyumna was taken to his (home-) city (Dvārakā) through the sky by his spouse who was capable of coursing through the sky.

26. Like unto a cloud accompanied with lightening, he, with his consort, alighted from the sky into (Kṛṣṇa's) excellent harem crowded with hundreds of beautiful women, Oh king.

27-28. Beholding him, of a complexion dark-blue like a cloud, wearing a yellow silken garment, of extra-ordinarily long arms, reddish eyes, with an enchanting smile and charming countenance, with his lotus-face extremely graced with dark-blue curly locks of hair, the ladies thought him to be Kṛṣṇa himself and out of bashfulness concealed themselves immediately wherever they could.

29. Coming to a conclusion from the distinguishing characteristics between the two (such as absence of *Śrivatsa* that he was not Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the ladies approached him with great delight and wonderment as he was accompanied by a jewel-like beautiful damsel.

30. Then among them Rukmiṇī, the sweet-tongued princess of Vidarbha, of bluish (corners of) eyes, recollected her lost son and milk of maternal affection oozed out of her breasts.

31. "Who can this be a jewel among men ? Whose son is this lotus-eyed one ? What mother has borne him in her womb ? Who is this damsel obtained by him ?

32. If my son who being stolen away from the maternity chamber and thus lost, be alive somewhere, he would be his compeer in age, similarity of features, etc.

33. How could this boy inherit so much resemblance to the Lord wielding the Śārṅga bow in form (features), limbs, gait, tone of voice, smiles and way of looking.

34. Or, he must really be the same child whom I bore in my womb. I have begun to feel more affection for him and my left arm is throbbing."[1]

35. While Rukmiṇī, the princess of Vidarbha, was thus reflecting (to ascertain whether Pradyumna could be her son), Kṛṣṇa, of glorious renown, came there along with Devakī and Vasudeva.

1. This is regarded as an auspicious omen in regard to women, foreboding good tidings.

36. Though Kṛṣṇa knew the actual state of affairs, the Lord kept mum. It was Nārada who told all the story from his (Pradyumna's) kidnapping by Śambara.

37. Listening to that extremely miraculous account (of Pradyumna's life till then), the ladies of Kṛṣṇa's harem joyfully congratulated him upon his return after many years, like one returning to life from the realm of death.

38. Devakī and Vasudeva, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Rukmiṇī and other women of the harem embraced the young couple and were transported with joy.

39. Hearing that Pradyumna who was missing so long has arrived, the citizens of Dvārakā exclaimed; How wonderful ! How happy it is that the boy who (being missing) was as good as dead, has returned to life."

40. It is not wonderful that owing to his close resemblance to his father Kṛṣṇa, many times Pradyumna's (step-) mothers mistook him for Kṛṣṇa and resorted to seclusion (the passion of love was awakened in them). The very thought of the god of Love provokes passion. What of other women when Pradyumna, the god of love, who was the reflection of exact semblance of the Lord, the abode of goddess Lakṣmī, presented himself within the range of their sight?

## CHAPTER FIFTY SIX

*The story of Syamantaka jewel*

(Kṛṣṇa's marriage with Jāmbavatī and Satyabhāmā)

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. Satrājita[1] who had committed an offence against Kṛṣṇa, gave, of his own accord and making some special effort for it, his own daughter in marriage to Kṛṣṇa offering therewith the *Syamantaka* jewel (as an atonement for the offence).

1. The word is spelt both ways : *Satrājita* and *Satrājit*. The translation retains the spelling adopted in the original Sk. text.

*King Parikṣit enquired* :

2. What offence did Satrājita commit against Kṛṣṇa, Oh Brāhmaṇa sage ? Whence did he get the Syamantaka gem? Why did he offer his daughter in marriage to Hari?

*Śri Śuka narrated* :

3. The Sun-god was an intimate friend of his own devotee Satrājita. The Sun-god was so much affectionate to and pleased with Satrājita that he presented to him the Syamantaka gem.

4. Wearing that gem about his neck and effulgent like the Sun-god, he could hardly be visible and recognized due to its dazzling lustre, Oh king.

5. Beholding him even from a distance, people felt blinded with his brilliant splendour and believing him to be the Sun-god, reported it to the Lord who was playing at dice.

6. "Salutations to You, Oh Nārāyaṇa, the Wielder of the conch, discus and mace ! Oh Lotus-eyed Dāmodara ! Oh Govinda, the Delight of Yadus.

7. Blinding the eyes of men with his lustre, here comes the Sun-god of scorching rays, with a desire to pay visit to you, Oh Protector of the world.

8. Prominent gods really try to seek the way (to find you) in all the three worlds. Having come to know today that you live undisclosed among the Yadus, the birthless Sun-god has come to see you, Oh Lord."

*Śri Śuka said* :

9. Hearing the report of the ignorant people, the Lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa laughed loudly and remarked : He is not the Sun-god but Satrājit dazzling with the jewel (*Syamantaka*).

10. Satrājit entered his affluent, splendid mansion beautified with auspicious objects (for the celebration of his successful return with the gem) and got the jewel properly installed by Brāhmaṇas in the shrine of his family deities.

11. Oh King ! Every day, the gem yielded eight *bhāras*[1] of gold. Where the gem is installed and worshipped, there is no danger from famines, epidemics, calamities, serpents, diseases, inauspicious things or from rogues.

12. He was solicited by Kṛṣṇa on one occasion for the gem, for presenting to Ugrasena, the king of Yādavas. But being greedy of wealth, he did not comply regardless of the consequences of such refusal (to the Lord's request).

13. One day, Prasena (the brother of Satrājit) wore that jewel of extra-ordinary lustre about his neck and mounting his horse, he went to the forest for hunting.

14. Having killed Prasena along with his horse, a lion snatched the gem from him (out of curiosity for the dazzling thing) and was entering his mountain cave when he was killed by Jāmbavat who desired to possess the gem.

15. In his den, he used it as a toy for his young son. Not finding his brother, Satrājit was greatly tormented.

16. (He expressed his suspicion :) "My brother is most probably murdered by Kṛṣṇa as he went out to the forest with the Syamantaka jewel round his neck". Hearing that, people passed on the rumour in whispers from ear to ear.

17. Hearing that rumour, the Lord accompanied by some citizens followed the track of Prasena (Prasena's horse) in order to wipe out the calumny imputed to him.

18. People saw that Prasena and his horse were killed by a lion in the forest and that the lion was killed by a bear on the side of the mountain.

19. Keeping outside the citizens (with instructions to wait), the Lord alone entered the den of the king of bears, though it was terrible and full of blinding darkness.

20. Seeing there that the excellent gem was used as a toy of a male child he determined to take it away and stayed there near the child.[2]

21. Seeing that extra-ordinary person (not seen before) the nurse of the child screamed out as in fear. Hearing that,

1. ŚR. quotes verses which show that one *bhāra* is equivalent to 8000 *Tolās* (1 *Tola* = 11.66 grams).

2. VB quotes a verse from *Purāṇas* as the nurses lullaby to the child, "The lion killed Prasena, the lion was killed by Jāmbavat. Oh tender child, don't cry. This Syamantaka is for you."

the enraged Jāmbavān who was the foremost among the mighty rushed at him, in rage.

22. Verily, in his indignation, he failed to understand Kṛṣṇa's greatness, and regarding him as an ordinary person he fought with him, his own Master (Rāma in previous incarnation), the Supreme Lord.

23. Like two hawks fighting for a piece of meat, the combat between them was tumultuous as they tried to overthrow each other by weapons, rocks, trees and arms.

24. There was a continuous combat for twenty-eight days (and nights as well) hitting each other with fists, harsh like the strokes of thunderbolt.

25. Jāmbavān was extremely wonderstruck as his joints and limbs were crushed and dislocated by the blows of Kṛṣṇa's fists and as his strength decreased and the body was full of perspiration., He addressed to him :

26. "(Now) I know You to be Lord Viṣṇu, the Ancientmost Person, the Creator of the Universe and the Controller thereof Who constitute the energy, the power of endurance (mental strength) and physical power of all beings.

27. You are really the Creator of the progenitors of the Universe ; You are the Reality that underlies it (as the material cause of the created substances). You are the Time Spirit which controls and destroys the world. You are the Supreme Soul of all.

28. You are verily my Lord Rāma, at whose side-glances which were slightly enkindled with wrath, the whole ocean full of alligators, whales and other aquatic animals got agitated and was made to give way to you; Who built a bridge across the sea as if it was a memorial of your glory; who burnt down the city of Laṅkā and by whose arrows, the heads of demons rolled on the ground."

29-30. To his devotee, the king of bears who had thus realized the knowledge of his being the Supreme Spirit, Kṛṣṇa, that Imperishable glorious Lord, the lotus-eyed son of Devakī, touched (all over his body, out of compassion) with his bliss-bestowing hand (relieving all his fatigue, wounds and pain in the combat) and out of Supreme Mercy and Grace, spoke to him in a voice deep with affection.

31. "We (I and citizens of Dvārakā) arrived here at the entrance of your cave for the sake of the Syamantaka gem. (Though some of the false imputation of calumny is hereby removed), I have entered the den to wipe out completely the false accusation (of Prasena's murder) against me, by means of (i.e. by producing) this gem."

32. It is traditionally reported that thus addressed, Jāmbavān gladly offered his daughter Jāmbavatī in marriage to Kṛṣṇa, along with the Syamantaka gem, by way of worshipping him.

32A. *VR's Text adds* :

Lord Kṛṣṇa who is affectionate to his devotees, was worshipped (by Jāmbavān) with many other excellent precious stones. And the Lord instantly bestowed on him (or decided to confer upon him) the Supreme Emancipation from which there is no return to *saṁsāra*.

33. After Waiting (at the entrance of the cave) for twelve days and finding that Kṛṣṇa entered the cave but had not returned out of it, the people who accompanied him there, returned to their own city (Dvārakā) in grief.

34. When they heard the report that Kṛṣṇa had not issued out of the cave (for the last twelve days), Devakī (Kṛṣṇa's mother), queen Rukmiṇī, Vasudeva (Kṛṣṇa's father), his friends and kinsmen deeply grieved (his non-return).

35. Citizens of Dvārakā cursed Satrājit (for the disappearance of Kṛṣṇa). Deeply grieving, they devotedly worshipped the goddess Durgā (well-known by the name, Candrabhāgā),[1] the Supreme Illusive potency of the Lord, for the safe return of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

36. (Possibly) due to the blessing of the goddess they received through their worship and prayers of the deity, Lord Hari manifested Himself along with his spouse (Jāmbavatī) and with his purpose (recovery of the Syamantaka gem) completely achieved, thus thrilling them with joy.

1. ŚR. remarks : *Candrabhāgāṁ nāma Durgām* suggests that his Text most probably read *Candrabhāgā* for *Mahāmāyā* and was *Upatasthus Candrabhāgāṁ Durgām*" etc. instead of the current one.

37. All of them were transported with ecstatic joy to find Kṛṣṇa as if returned to life after death and that too with a spouse and the Syamantaka gem about his neck.

38. Summoning Satrājit to the royal assembly, in the presence of the king (Ugrasena), the Lord narrated the story of the recovery of the gem and entrusted the gem to his (Satrājit's) care.

39. Deeply feeling ashamed, he took that Symantaka jewel. Casting down his head and full of repentance for his guilt (of traducing the Lord), he returned home.

40. Constantly brooding over the sinful act (of caluminating an innocent person like Kṛṣṇa) and being agitated and perplexed at his conflict with a powerful party, he pondered : "How can I wipe off this misdeed and misbehaviour? Or how will Lord Kṛṣṇa be propitiated and gracious unto me?

41. What course would lead to my well-being whereby people won't censure me who am really short-sighted, mean, foolish and greedy of wealth.

42. I shall offer him my daughter who is a jewel among women, as well as that Syamantaka gem to him. This is the proper expedient, otherwise no peace can be brought about (between us) by any other way."

43. As the tradition reports, by this reasoning process, he reached this decision. Taking personal initiative in the matter, Satrājit offered his daughter who was excellent in all respects as well as the Syamantaka jewel to him.

44. According to ritualistic formalities prescribed in the Śāstras the Lord married Satyabhāmā who was blessed with good disposition, charming beauty, generosity and other excellent virtues and had many suitors soliciting her hand.

45. (Declining the offer of the Syamantaka gem) the glorious Lord said, "We do not accept the Syamantaka gem. Let it be with you as you are the devotee of the Sun-god (the donor of the gift). We shall enjoy the yield of the gem (viz. gold. As you have no son. I am the legal heir for the gold yielded everyday by the gem).

## CHAPTER FIFTY SEVEN

### *The Story of Syamantaka*

*(Murder of Satājit for Syamantaka—Akrūra allowed to retain it)*

*Śrī Śuka said:*

1. Hearing the report of Pāṇḍavas and Kuntī having been burnt (in the house of lac at Vāraṇāvata[1]), Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Ruler of Senses, though knowing the reality (about their escape to safety), went with Balarāma to the Kuru country (to its capital Hastināpura) as a formal condolence visit to relatives.

2. It is traditionally reported that as co-sharers in their grief, he met Bhīṣma, Kṛpa along with Vidura, Gāndhārī as well as Droṇa and exclaimed: 'Alas ! What a pity !'

3. Taking advantage of this opportunity (of Kṛṣṇa's absence), Akrūra[2] and Kṛtavarmā instigated Śatadhanvā[3], "Why should not the gem Syamantaka be seized (now, as Kṛṣṇa is away) ?

4. Satrājit who, having positively promised us his beautiful, jewel-like daughter, set us at nought and gave her in marriage to Kṛṣṇa. Why should not such a fellow follow his brother (to the land of death) ?"

5. His mind being thus thoroughly perverted and prejudiced, the wicked-most, sinful fellow with his span of life

1. *Vide MBH. Ādi.* ch. 147.

2. VT. takes pains to absolve Akrūra of his participation in the criminal conspiracy of murdering Satrājit. His explanation that being enraged at Satrājit's accusation of Kṛṣṇa, Akrūra wanted to kill him, is not convincing—as Satrājit offered both Satyabhāmā and Syamantaka to Kṛṣṇa and it was Kṛṣṇa who of his own accord requested Satrājit to retain the jewel with him. When matters were amicably settled, to instigate Śatadhanvā to murder Satrājit is certainly not creditable. And his subsequent absconding with Syamantaka and the production of the gem when cornered by Kṛṣṇa, reflects against the character of this 'one of the greatest devotees' of Kṛṣṇa.

3. One of the five sons of Hṛdika of the Yadu clan, and a brother of Kṛtavarmā (*vide supra* 9.29.27)

diminished (and was about to be terminated soon), murdered Satrājit out of greed, while he was asleep.

6. While the women (in the family) were screaming and wailing loudly and helplessly, he, like a butcher knifing a beast, finished with Satrājit and absconded, taking with him the gem Syamantaka.

7. Beholding her father thus slain, Satyabhāmā was stricken with grief and bewailed, 'Oh father! father I am undone' And she fainted.

8. Depositing that dead body in a trough full of oil (to prevent its decomposition), she rushed to Hastināpura. Tormented as she was, she reported the matter of her father's assassination to Kṛṣṇa who (being omniscient) already knew the facts (of the case).

9. Hearing that (tragic incident) Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, both the Lords of the world, following the (customary) way of human beings bewailed, 'Alas, what a calamity has befallen us!', with eyes flowing with tears.

10. From Hastināpura, the Lord with his consort and elder brother returned forthwith to his capital and started to adapt measures to slay Śatadhanvā and recover the gem from him.*

* *Vj's Text adds*:

10.1. At this juncture, there arrived from the capital[1] of the Pāñcāla country, an emissary deputed by king Yajñasena (Drupada) announcing the self-choice (*Svayaṁvara*) type of marriage of his princess Yajñasenī (Draupadī).

10.2. Being invited there along with his brother, Srī Kṛṣṇa went to (Kāmpilya), the capital of Pāñcālas and saw there the teen-aged sons of Pāṇḍu.

10.3-4. Those princes were perfectly disguised as Brāhmaṇas and were not seen before. Accompanying them, after they had achieved their ambition through the exhibition of their prowess by hitting the mark (the test for winning Draupadī's hand), he arrived at a potter's residence. He paid respects to his paternal aunt (Kuntī) and took leave of prince Yudhiṣṭhira.

10.4A. And hastened back to Dvārakā to slay Śatadhanvā.

1. viz. Kāmpilya, the capital of South Pāñcāla, the kingdom of Drupada. It is now known as Kampil, 28 miles N.E. of Fathegaḍh in Farrukkhabad District, U.P.—GDAMI p. 88.

11. Knowing the punitive measures adopted by Kṛṣṇa, Śatadhanvā got afraid and being anxious to save his life, he begged of Kṛtavarmā's help. But he (Kṛtavarmā) replied:

12. "I will not offend Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, the Lords of the universe. Who can hope to live in peace after committing an offence against them ?

13. The great warrior Kaṁsa was forsaken by the goddess of wealth and prosperity due to his hatred of them, and had to leave this world along with his followers, while Jarāsandha had to take to flight in (each of the) seventeen expeditions losing even his own chariot."

14. Being thus refused help (by Kṛtavarmā), he entreated Akrūra for help. But he too replied: "What person knowing the might of these two Lords of the world, can dare to oppose them ?

*VJ.'s Text adds*:

14. A. God Śiva whose abode is mount Kailāsa, used to bow down to Hari with his head. He (Hari) has vanquished Hamsa and Ḍimbhaka who have become arrogant and overbearing due to boons (got by them), in the battle. The great poisonous serpent (Kāliya) was expelled by him from the pool (in the Yamunā).

15. It is out of sport that he creates, maintains and destroys this Universe. People deluded by his *Māyā* (the Unborn) do not comprehend the activities of the Creator of the Universe.

16. As a boy of seven years, he uprooted a mountain and held it up on one hand easily, as in play, like a child holding an umbrella-like mushroom.

17. Salutations to the Glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa of miraculous deeds. I bow down to the Infinite Lord, the Prime Cause of the universe, the Indwelling Soul of all."

18. Thus refused help by Akrūra, Śatadhanvā deposited the great jewel with him and mounting a horse (or a mare) capable of going hundred *yojanas* a day, he took to flight.

19. Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa rode in their chariots carrying

the flag with the emblem of Garuḍa, pursued with very swift horses, the murderer of his father-in-law, Oh king.

20. Śatadhanvā left his horse that dropped down (dead through fatigue), in a park of Mithilā. Being afraid, he began to run on foot, Kṛṣṇa also, out of rage, followed him on foot.

21. The glorious Lord who pursued on foot beheaded him with his Sudarśana disk of very sharp edge, and he searched his upper and lower clothes for the Symantaka jewel.

22. Not finding the jewel on his person, Kṛṣṇa returned and spoke to his elder brother, "Śatadhanvā has been killed in vain, for the jewel is not on his person."

23. Then advised Balarama, "The jewel has been certainly deposited by Śatadhanvā with some person (at Dvārakā). You return to the capital and trace him (the person possessing the jewel).

24. I wish to see king Videha, my dearest friend." Speaking thus, Balarāma, the delight of Yadus, entered the city of Mithilā, Oh king !

25. Seeing him come unexpectedly, the king of Mithilā, being highly pleased in mind, immediately rose up to receive him, and worshipped duly his honourable guest with suitable presents and other articles of worship.

26. The powerful lord Balarāma spent some years in the city of Mithilā. He was duly honoured by the noble-souled Janaka with great affection. It was during that period that Suyodhana, the son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, learnt the art of fighting with mace, at his feet.

27. Returning to Dvārakā, Lord Kṛṣṇa who wanted to please his beloved wife, reported the death of Śatadhanvā and also of his not finding the gem with him.

28. Thereupon, along with friends and well-wishers, the Lord caused to be performed all the obsequies of Satrājit his father-in-law who had been murdered.

29. Having heard the report of the slaying of Śatadhanvā, Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā, the instigators of the crime, were overwhelmed with fear and absconded (from Dvārakā).

30. When Akrūra left Dvārakā, there appeared evil portents to the citizens of Dvārakā and they frequently suffered

from physical and mental troubles as well as troubles caused by gods and elements (*Mahābhūtas*), so goes the tradition.

*VJ.'s Text Adds*:

30-A. Thereupon Śrī Kṛṣṇa inquired of old people of whom Ugrasena was prominent: "What is the reason that after such a long time. these ill omens and calamities are befalling us?"

31. Forgetting what I have spoken before, some chroniclers declare as above. But how is it possible that ominous portents will occur in the home-town of Lord Kṛṣṇa who is the abode of ascetics (capable of counteracting such evils by their very presence)?

32. Formerly, so the tradition goes, when the lord of rains did not send seasonal showers, the king of Kāśi gave his daughter Gāndinī in marriage to Śvaphalka (the father of Akrūra) who came there as a guest and there fell showers of rain in the kingdom of Kāśi.

33. His son Akrūra possesses the same (hereditory) miraculous powers. Wherever he stays, the rain-god sends showers at the proper season. No calamities or epidemics (like cholera) affect at that area.

34. Hearing the advice of the elders and considering that this (i.e. the departure of Akrūra) could be the cause (of these calamities, but the absence of the Syamantaka gem is the real cause), Śrī Kṛṣṇa managed to bring back Akrūra (to Dvārakā) and spoke to him.

35. Śrī Kṛṣṇa who knew the minds of all (understood that this great devotee does not covet to possess the Syamantaka gem, and must have certainly brought it with him) received him with deep respect, engaged him in delightful conversation, narrated to him some pleasantries and spoke with a smile:

36. "We already know that the brilliant gem Symantaka is in your possession since it was deposited with you by Śatadhanvā, Oh master of charities.

37. As Satrājita had no male issue, (legally) the sons of his daughter Satyabhāmā should offer water oblations and lumps of rice (to the departed soul), pay off his debts and inherit the remaining property.

38. As you observe vows properly, let the Syamantaka gem, however, remain in your possession, as it is difficult for others to retain it. But my elder brother (Balarāma) does not believe that I do not possess the gem (he suspects that I have it with me).

39. Please show to our relatives (the Symantaka gem) and bring peace of mind to them, Oh highly fortunate Akrūra. (You cannot deny the possession of the gem as) now-a-days your sacrificial performances on altars of gold are going on continuously (without any interruption or break)."

40. Pursuaded with such sweet words, Akrūra, the son of Śvaphalka, brought the gem wrapped up in a piece of cloth and handed over to him that gem which was resplendent like the Sun.

41. Having made Akrūra to show the gem to his relatives and clansmen*, he wiped out the blame and suspicion imputed to him by (producing) the gem (from Akrūra) and the Lord returned that gem to Akrūra.

42. He who reads, hears, contemplates this highly auspicious episode rich with the exploits of the glorious Lord Viṣṇu, the Ruler of the Universe—an episode which wipes out all sins—becomes free from evil reputation and sins, and attains ever-lasting peace.

* *Here Vj's Text adds* :

41.1. The ruler of the world cleared off the accusation levelled against Him and explained the details of the case to Balarāma who had been away so long and had returned for seeing the gem (and to convince himself personally).

41.2. But on seeing it, he regarded himself to be the proper person to possess it and coveted to have it, Oh prominent Kaurava. Satyabhāmā considered herself to be (legally) the proper heir eligible (to possess) that hereditary property.

41.3. Without knowing the mind of Hari, she confidently wished to possess it. Even Jāmbavatī desired to get that gem as it was given as dowry by her father (as such her claim was legal).

41.4. Knowing all these (covetous) claims, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the consort of goddess Lakṣmī handed over again the gem to Akrūra.

## CHAPTER FIFTY EIGHT

*Espousals of Lord Kṛṣṇa*

*Śrī Śuka said:*

1. On one occasion, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the most prominent one among men, went to Indraprastha (modern Delhi) to see Pāṇḍavas who were celebrated for their bravery and other virtues. The Lord of the goddess Śrī was accompanied by Sātyaki and others.

2. Seeing Lord Mukunda, the Supreme Ruler of all, coming, all the sons of Pṛthā (Pāṇḍavas) immediarely stood up and those warriors went to receive him just as the divinities presiding over senses do to the returning main vital respiration (as senses become active when respiration returns).

3. Those warriors embraced the Imperishable Lord and got all their sins removed by the contact with his person. Beholding his countenance, beaming with affectionate smile, all of them were transported with joy.

4. Having bowed down to the feet of Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma, he embraced Arjuna and was in their turn paid respects by the twin Nakula and Sahadeva.

5. When he was comfortably seated on an excellent throne, the dark-complexioned, recently-married Draupadī who was above censure (in spite of her marriage with five brothers), came there slowly and bashfully bowed down to him.

6. In the same way, Sātyaki was worshipped and paid respect to by Pāṇḍavas. Others also were equally received and they sat on their respective seats around Kṛṣṇa.

7. Approaching Kuntī, Kṛṣṇa paid respects to her. He was looked at with eyes full of affection and tears, and was as if embraced by her looks. He was inquired about the relatives. He made queries about her health and well-being as also of her daughter-in-law, and other relatives.

8. Remembering all the many sufferings they had undergone (at Vāraṇāvata and till their coming to the Svayaṁvara of Draupadī), her throat was choked with perplexing affection and eyes full of tears, she spoke to Kṛṣṇa who manifested himself in order to remove all the sufferings (of his devotees).

9. "Oh Kṛṣṇa, when remembering us, your relatives, my brother Akrūra was deputed to us by you, we had been happy since then. For we were blessed with a protector like you.*

10. You being the well-wisher and the very soul of the universe, do not entertain the deluding notion of partiality (calling someone as your own and disavowing relationship with others). You, however, abide in the hearts of those devotees who constantly remember you and destroy all their sufferings by your very presence therein.

*Yudhiṣṭhira said*:

11. "Oh Supreme Lord ! I do not know what righteous act has been performed by us inasmuch as you, who are not easily visible even to experts in Yoga, have manifested yourself to our view, in spite of our poor understanding".

12. Earnestly requested by the king (Yudhiṣṭhira), the All-pervading Lord happily spent the four months of the rainy season there, giving delight to the eyes of the citizens of Indraprastha.

* *Vj.'s Text adds* :

9.1 "I have been quite at ease and happy since the time you, without forgetting, specially came to visit us while we were (at Kāmpilya) in the Pañcāla country".

9. 2-3. When Kuntī spoke thus, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Master in Yoga, of his own accord told her : "Having seen your sons along with their bride while they were (then) living in-cognito in the Pāñcālas (in its capital city Kāmpilya) at the potter's house, I departed hastily on that very day.

9.4-6. For, I wanted to kill Śatadhanvā, the enemy (and murderer of Satyabhāmā's father. When that evil genius Śatadhanvā was killed (and the Syamantaka gem was not on his person), my elder brother, Balarāma, the wielder of a plough (as his principal weapon) got angry with me. Disregarding me, he went to the Videha country in despondent mood. I stayed in the city (of Dvārakā) all this pretty long period, anxiously waiting for his return. Due to the pressure of work, I did not go anywhere".

To him who was explaining thus (the reasons of not seeing her so long), Kuntī, with her heart filled with feelings of affection, spoke to Him.

13-14. One day[1], equipping himself with the Gāṇḍīva bow, two quivers with inexhaustible stock of arrows and putting on his armour, Arjuna, the victorious, mounted his chariot distinguished by the flag bearing a monkey-emblem, prepared himself for hunting. Arjuna, the destroyer of hostile warriors, accompanied by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, entered a dense forest infested with a number of tigers and wild beasts.

15. He hunted down with his shafts a number of tigers, boars, buffaloes, antelopes (called *ruru*), *śarabhas* (a fabulous eight-legged animal, capable of killing lions), bisons, rhinoceroses, hares and porcupines.

16. As the day for performing sacrifice (or the *Śrāddha*-performance) had arrived, the attendants carried away those beasts which were considered proper and pure as oblation to the sacrificial fire.

17. Having sipped the water thrice (as *ācamana*), those two dark-complexioned great (chariot) warriors drank the crystal-clear water and noticed a charming girl strolling about.

18. Arjuna who was deputed by his friend Śrī Kṛṣṇa, approached that beautiful damsel of well-set teeth and charming appearance and enquired of her:

19. 'Oh beautiful maiden! Who are you? Whose daughter are you? Whence have you come? What is the intention (of strolling here)? I believe you wish to have a spouse? Tell me everything, Oh beautiful lady.'

*Kālindi replied*:

20. I am the daughter of the Sun-god. I am performing austere penance with the desire of getting the boon-bestowing god Viṣṇu who is worth courting, as my consort.

21. I do not wish to seek as my spouse any other person than the god Viṣṇu, the abode of goddess Śrī, Oh hero. May

1. This episode must have taken place after the burning down of the Khāṇḍava forest by Arjuna. God Agni who was satisfied by consuming that forest, gave Arjuna the Gāṇḍīva bow and two inexhaustible quivers of arrows and the chariot with the monkey-flag. —*MBH Ādi* 224.3-20.

the glorious Lord Mukunda (Kṛṣṇa), the refuge of the helpless, be propitious unto me.

22. I am known as Kālindī. I dwell in the mansion constructed by my father under the waters of the Yamunā and I mean to stay there, till I am able to see the immortal Lord Acyuta."

23. Arjuna (the controller of sleep) reported it *verbatim* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He knew it already. He placed the girl in the chariot and approached Kṛṣṇa in the presence of Yudhiṣṭhira along with her.*

24. When Kṛṣṇa was requested to help in the matter, he immediately got an extremely wonderful and beautiful city built by Viśvakarmā for the sons of Pāṇḍu.

25.** While the glorious Lord stayed there with the desire of doing some good to his relatives (or devotees), he became the charioteer of Arjuna for consigning the Khāṇḍava forest to the Fire-god.

26. Being pleased with him, the Fire-god bestowed upon Arjuna the (Gāṇḍīva) bow, four white horses and the chariot (drawn by them), two quivers with inexhaustible stock of arrows and an armour impregnable by (the arms etc. discharged by) armed soldiers.

27. Maya (the Asura architect) who was rescued from the (forest-) conflagration, (built for his friend) and presented to his friend Arjuna an assembly-hall wherein Duryodhana had optic illusions and he mistook a sheet of water for a paved floor and *vice-versa*.

28. Taking leave of Yudhiṣṭhira and obtaining consent of his friends, he returned to Dvārakā accompanied by Sātyaki and others.

*Here Vj's text adds* :

23.1. While Kṛṣṇa, the Controller of sense-organs, was happily staying at Indraprastha, he sent for Viśvakarman, the master architect of that period.

23.2-3. He made Viśvakarmā to build a wonderful city with high ramparts, portals, towers, mansions, gates. It became celebrated as the city of Indra (*Indra-prastha*). He did so with the desire to oblige his ralatives. Accompanied with his relatives, be was permitted (to depart from Indraprastha).

25** A bit of anachronism : *vide* verse 13 above.

29. Thereupon, in the auspicious season when the day was propitious and an auspicious constellation of stars was in ascendance, he married Kālindī.

29-A. *VJ.'s Text adds*:

Who being endowed with charming beauty and youthfulness gave delight to the mind and the eye).
And he thereby enhanced the joy and auspicious prosperity of his own people.

30. Vinda and Anuvinda, (the princes) of Avanti who were subservient followers of Duryodhana, forbade their sister (Mitravindā from choosing Kṛṣṇa as her consort) in her *svayaṁvara*, even though she was devotedly attached to *him*.

31. Śrī Kṛṣṇa then forcibly carried away Mitravindā, the daughter of his paternal aunt, Rājādhidevī (*vide Supra*. 9.24-31) while all the kings (attending the *Svayaṁvara*) stood agazing.

32. There was a very pious king called Nagnajit ruling over Kosala (at Ayodhyā). He had an excellent daughter named Satyā (Nīlā) who was also known as Nāgnajitī (after her father's name).

33. Kings were not able to win her for marriage without subduing seven extremely dreadful, wicked bulls with pointed horns and which never brooked the very smell of (approaching) warriors. [The taming of these bulls was the condition precedent of being eligible for Satyā's hand].

34. Hearing that the princess could be won only by the subduer of those bulls, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Protector of Sātvatas, proceeded to Ayodhyā, the capital of Kosalas, with a vast army.

35. With great pleasure, the king of Kosalas received him respectfully with due formalities, such as going forth to welcome, offering a seat etc. and worshipped him with very valuable presents and articles of worship, and in his turn he was reciprocally congratulated by Kṛṣṇa.

36. Beholding that a suitor who was agreeable and desirable to her in every respect had arrived in state, the princess of that great king fell in love with him, (who was the consort of goddess Lakṣmī). (She prayed:) 'If I have devoutly wor-

shipped the Lord by the observance of the vows, may this Śrī Kṛsṇa be my spouse and all auspicious benedictions prove true.'

37. What should I do whereby that glorious Lord will be pleased with me—the Lord, the dust on whose lotus-feet is borne on their heads by the goddess Śrī, the lotus-born god Brahmā, god Śiva, the Lord of mount Kailāsa along with the protectors of different worlds; Who is the Supreme Ruler and who, from time to time sportively assumes various forms with the object of enforcing the Law (of righteousness) as ordained by him ?"

38. And to Kṛṣṇa who was duly worshipped, the king submitted again: 'Oh Nārāyaṇa ! The Lord of the World ! What more service a poor person like me can render to you who are perfectly satisfied in your own spiritual bliss.'

*Śri Śuka said*:

39. The Lord who was pleased with him and occupied a comfortable seat, smilingly addressed to the king in a voice deep like the rumbling of clouds.

*The Lord said*:

39-A. *VJ.'s Text adds*:

'Wise men opine that that suitor (bridegroom) is the best who does not propose his suit on any other occasion except at the time of *svayaṁvara* (self-choice-by the bride-type of marriage). Oh Lord of the earth ! It is such a suitor who (proposes his suit) when he gets an invitation along with other kings who might participate for the same object (as suitors)[1].

40. Wise men have strongly censured all entreaties on behalf of a prince—even if he be an humble *kṣattriya* but is following the path of the duty prescribed by *śāstras*. It is out of a strong desire for securing your friendship that I am soliciting you for your daughter (in marriage). And we are not prepared to pay any price (for the same).'

1. *saḥ arthārthī tāṁ velāṁ kālaṁ vinā āhvayati ātmānam iti śeṣaḥ*—VJ.

*The king said*:

41. 'What other suitor (bridegroom) superior to you can there be in this world, Oh Lord—a bridegroom most covetable for the girl, as being the only abode of all excellent virtues and on whose bosom the goddess Śrī abides permanently inseparable.

42. But with a view to securing a suitable bridegroom to the maiden, we have already laid down a condition for testing the prowess of the suitor, O Prominent *Sāttvata*.

43. These are the seven bulls untamed and ungovernable, O warrior. A great many princes have been discomfited and got their limbs pierced and broken by them.

44. (How strongly I wish it) If these (bulsl) be tamed and controlled by you alone. O scion of the Yadu clan, your honour will be the desired-most suitor to my daughter O Lord of the goddess Śrī.'

45. Hearing the nature of the convention, the Lord fastened his girdle tightly. He divided himself into seven persons and controlled the bulls easily as if in a sport.

46. With their pride crushed and spirit broken, he tied them with ropes (after passing the cords through their noses) and he sportively drew them (after him) like unto a child drawing wooden toy-bulls.

47. The king was wonderstruck. With pleasure he offered his daughter in marriage to Kṛṣṇa. The Lord espoused her with due religious formalities as she was worthy of him.

48. The Queens were extremely delighted to find that their daughter secured her beloved Kṛṣṇa as her spouse and there was a high festival (on that occasion).

49. Conchs, drums and kettle-drums were sounded. Vocal and instrumental music along with expressions of benedictions by Brāhmaṇas were heard. Rapturously exulted men and women donned excellent clothes, and decked themselves with garlands and ornaments (on the joyous occasion).

50-51. By way of dowry the mighty king gave ten thousand cows, three thousand excellently dressed young women (as maid-servants) all decked with necklaces of gold-coins, nine thousand elephants, chariots hundred times the elephants,

horses hundred times the number of chariots and men-servants hundred times the number of horses.[1]

52. With his heart overwhelmed with affection, the king of Kosalas sent the couple in a chariot escorted with a big army.

53. Although the kings were formerly worsted in their encounter with the Yādavas and the uncontrollable bulls they, out of extreme jealousy obstructed Kṛṣṇa on the way while he was taking the bride with him.

54. As those kings advanced discharging volleys of arrows, Arjuna, the wielder of the Gāṇḍīva bow, keen on obliging his relative, routed them as a lion would do to insignificant beasts.

55. On reaching Dvārakā along with the dowry, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī and the prominent leader of Yadus, passed his time in conjugal happiness with Satyā.

56. Śrī Kṛṣṇa married Bhadrā, the princess of Kekayas, the daughter of His paternal aunt Śrutakīrti (vide Supra 9.24. 30) as she was offered in marriage by her brothers Santardana and others.

57. Like unto Garuḍa swooping down upon the (pitcher of) nectar (in the teeth of opposition from gods), Kṛṣṇa, single-handedly carried away Lakṣmaṇā, the princess of the Madra-ruler, who was endowed with auspicious marks, in her *svayaṁvara* (setting at nought the assembled suitor-princess).

58. Similarly, Śrī Kṛṣṇa had thousands (sixteen thousand) other spouses, all of whom were good-looking and whom he rescued from the prison of demon Narakāsura, the son of the goddess earth, after slaying him.

1. VR calculates them as follows :
9,000 elephants, 9000,00 chariots, 9000,00,00 horses, and 9000,00,00, men-servants.

## CHAPTER FIFTY NINE

*Narakāsura slain. The Pārijāta tree brought to Dvārakā*

*The king Parikṣit enquired* :

1. Be pleased to narrate to me the great prowess of Kṛṣṇa, the wielder of Śārṅga bow as to how he killed the demon Naraka, the son of the earth-goddess and those damsels (subsequently married to Kṛṣṇa) came to be taken to captivity by him (Naraka).

*Śri Śuka said* :

2. Kṛṣṇa was informed of the atrocious deeds of Narakāsura, the son of the Earth, such as snatching away his umbrella, the insignia of his Lordship of the heaven[1], depriving his mother Aditi of her ear-rings, his expulsion from Maṇiparvata, the peak of mount Mandara, the mountain of gods, through the complaint lodged by Indra[2]. He along with his consort (Satyabhāmā)[3] mounted Garuḍa and flew to Prāgjyotiṣapura[4] (the capital of Narakāsura).*

1. Naraka did not deprive Indra of his umbrella as complained by him, but that of Varuṇa *vide* verse 23 below. But ŚR. explains that that was an affront to Indra himself as he was the king of gods.

2. Cf. VP. 5.29.1 This chapter deals with the same episode. Hence the textual similarities.

3. ŚR. explains that Indra appraized Kṛṣṇa of these misdeeds while he was in the palace of Satyabhāmā. So to satisfy her curiosity, he took her with him. ŚR gives another reason : Satyabhāmā was an incarnation of the Earth goddess. When Narakāsura was born of the Earth through Viṣṇu's contact with her in the Boar (Varāha) incarnation, while lifting her up from the *rasātala*. He promised her not to kill Naraka without her consent. Hence Satyabhāmā—the mother earth—was taken by him as a consenting party.

4. Kāmarūpa or Kāmākṣyā in Assam (near Gauhati)—
—GDAMI p. 158.

**Vj.'s Text as given in the Vrindavana edition* :

2.1. While the highly blessed Kṛṣṇa was staying at Dvārakā, he was approached by Indra who came from the heaven in a distressed and despondent state of mind.

2.2. Lord Kṛṣṇa received him with due respect, consoled him (with a promise of help) and gave him leave to depart.

3. The city was well protected on all sides with inaccessible hilly fortifications and mounted missiles and weaponry and was unapproachable due to the moats of water and fire and belts of stormy winds and was covered on all sides by thousands of terrible and strong snares devised by the demon Mura.

4. He shattered down the hills with his mace, devastated the fortification of weaponry with his shafts, cut off the moats and belts with his discus and the wire-snares with his sword.

5. With the loud blast of his conch, He blew down the war-machinery (on the ramparts) and broke down the hearts of the proud warriors. Śrī Kṛṣṇa the wielder of the mace demolished the fortification with his heavy mace.

6. Hearing the (deafening) blast of the conch terrific like the thunders at the end of *yugas* (when the universe dissolves) the five-headed demon Mura who was sleeping under water, rose therefrom.

7. Raising up his trident, that dreadful demon extremely difficult to look at due to his glaring lustre like the Sun or the Fire (about to destroy the world) at the end of *yugas*, rushed at Kṛṣṇa, with his five mouths wide open as if to devour the world as a serpent would rush at Garuḍa.

8. Brandishing the trident with great velocity, he hurled it with all his might at Garuḍa and roared with all his five mouths. The loud roar filled the earth and the heaven, all the directions and the firmament in fact all the cavity of the Brahmāṇḍa (universe).

9. Thereupon powerfully hitting two arrows at the trident as it was dashing against Garuḍa, He cut it into three

2.3. He (Kṛṣṇa) arrived at the great city of the king of demons which was situated on a high peak of the Himālayas, and was inaccessible due to the moats, belts of water, fire and winds and was guarded by soldiers.

2.4. He quickly cut down the snares of Mura by his discus and the terrible rows of swords (round the fortification) with his sword.

2.5. Within the wink of an eye, Hari blew off the water by using the wind missile and extinguished the fire-belt with the missile of Varuṇa (creating downpour of water). And with the terrific blast of his conch, he broke down the spirit (heart) of the proud warriors.

and stuffed the demon's mouths with arrows. The demon (on his part) vehemently hurled his mace at Kṛṣṇa in that battle.

10. In that battle, the invincible elder brother of Gada (i.e. Śrī Kṛṣṇa) shattered, with his mace, the on-rushing mace to a thousand pieces. And as the demon was rusing at him with his arms raised-up, he easily severed off his heads with his discus.

11. With his heads dissevered, the demon fell lifeless into the water like a mountain with its peak cut off by the mighty Indra. Grieved at their father's death, his seven sons, enraged and impatient to avenge it, rushed at Kṛṣṇa fully prepared[1].

12. Directed by Naraka, the son of the Earth, the seven sons of Mura viz. Tāmra, Antarīkṣa, Śravaṇa, Vibhāvasu, Vasu Nabhasvān and the seventh Aruṇa, with their commander Pīṭha at their head, sallied forth to the battlefield, fully equipped with arms.[2]

13. Overwhelmed with rage, they advanced discharging volleys of shafts, swords, maces, darts, double-edged swords and javelins on the invincible Lord. As the tradition goes, the Almighty Lord of unfailing prowess reduced with his shafts the whole volley of weapons to sesamum-seed like pieces.[3]

14. He (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) despatched to the abode of the god of death all of them with Pīṭha as their leader, with their heads, thighs, arms, legs chopped off and their armours split open. Observing that his army commanders were massacred with the discus and shafts of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Naraka, the son of the

1. *VJ.'s Text differs* :

11—A. When the demon Mura was killed, a shower of flowers expressing joy at the event, fell on the head of Viṣṇu (i.e. Kṛṣṇa)

2. *VJ.'s Reading* :

12.1. Directed by Naraka and riding their chariots drawn by bulls, those warriors (sons of Mura) sallied forth from their homes. Overwhelmed with rage they discharged from their well-strung bow, weapons, like darts, *ṛṣṭis* (double edged weapons) and javelins at the unconquered Lord).

3. *VJ.'s Text adds* :

13.1. The remaining warriors then immediately sped to the great capital (Prāg-jyotiṣapura) and reported to Naraka that all sons of Mura were killed.

goddess Earth, could not control his rage and rushed out with his elephant-corps all exuding ichor and their pedigree traceable to Airāvata born (i.e. churned) out of the Milky ocean.*

15. Beholding Kṛṣṇa seated on Garuḍa along with his consort like a cloud emblazoned with a streak of lightening appearing just above the disc of the sun[1], Naraka discharged at him a *Śataghni*[2]. All his soldiers simultaneously struck at him.

16.* With his sharp pointed arrows equipped with variegated feathers, the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa, the elder brother of Gada, mowed down the army of Naraka cutting down the arms, thighs, necks and trunks of the soldiers simultaneously killing the horses and elephants.

17. (What a wonderful feat) O scion of the Kuru race! Hari cut down with three sharp arrows each of the weapons and missiles discharged (at Hari) by the hostile soldiers.

18. He was borne by Garuḍa who (on his part) struck down elephants with his wings, killing them with his bill, claws and wings.

19. Distressed by Garuḍa's attacks they retreated into the city. Seeing his army killed and routed by Garuḍa, Naraka continued to fight single-handed.

* *VJ.'s Text adds* :

14.1. Surrounded with thousands of chariots and elephants and accompanied by a vast army, Naraka arrived at the battlefield.

1. *VJ.'s Text* :

15.1 Beholding Kṛṣṇa—the Sun, the four-armed Kṛṣṇa wielding an excellent bow and a conch, the Kaumodakī mace and a disc (in each hand).

15.2. Espying Naraka dark blue like a cloud riding on elephant, Govinda blew his conch and roared like a lion.

15.3. The invincible army of the demon-king showered a volley of terrific arrows on the head of Kṛṣṇa. That son of the goddess Earth discharged at Kṛṣṇa his iron *Śataghnī* and he was struck with that blow.

15.4. It was a miracle when the volley of innumerable arrows discharged by Naraka were simultaneously splintered with his shafts smilingly despatched by the Lord.

2. A weapon used as a missile, supposed by some to be a sort of a rocket—ASD p. 545.

16* VJ.'s wording of the 1st half differs :

Then with volleys of sharp arrows decked with variegated feathers discharged at Naraka's army, the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa, etc.

20. Naraka, the son of the Earth goddess struck Garuḍa with his *Śakti* (spear) which had beaten back even *Vajra* (Indra's thunderbolt). Though hit by it, Garuḍa did not budge (an inch) like an elephant struck by a garland of flowers.[1]

21. His attempt having been thus frustrated, Naraka, the son of the Earth goddess, took up his spear to strike at Kṛṣṇa, but before he could hurl it, Hari, with his discus (Sudarśana) of razor-like sharp edge, severed the head of Naraka who was riding on elephant.

22. The head still adorned with ear-rings and a beautiful crown, though lying on the ground was shining, splendidly 'Alas!' "Bravo! Well done" applauded the sages, while the lords ofgods, showering flowers on Śrī Kṛṣṇa, eulogized him.

23. Thereupon the goddess Earth approached Kṛṣṇa and handed over to him a pair of ear-rings resplendent with jewels and chased in the purest gold (belonging to Aditi), accompanied with the necklace called Vaijayantī[2] and a garland of forest flowers (*vanamālā*), the umbrella (the royal insignia) of Varuṇa as well as a great jewel (or the peak of mount Mandara called *Maṇiparvata—vide* verse 2 above).

24. The goddess folded her palms, bowed down to him and with her heart full of sincere devotion extolled the Lord of the universe who is adored by gods.

1. *VJ.'s Text adds* :

20.1. Though deeply pierced with that *Śakti* (spear) Garuḍa did not move at all like an elephant struck with a garland, in that fight with Naraka.

20.2. Thereupon, taking up his bow Naraka discharged a shower of arrows on Kṛṣṇa, but Keśava cut them all with his shafts.

20.3. Noticing that Naraka had properly set an *ardha-candra* arrow (with semi-circular head) and was about to discharge by pulling the bow-string, Kṛṣṇa cut down his bow.

20.4. Then the son of the mother Earth picked up his heavy mace of hard iron, but Kṛṣṇa cut it with an arrow called *Kṣurapra* (an arrow with shoe-shaped sharp head).

20.5. After this, Naraka, the vanquisher of hostile forces hurled his sharp-edged axe at Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa) but he cut it down with his sword.

20.6. Then he threw at Kṛṣṇa seventyfive *Tomaras* (javelins) and Naraka, the destroyer of hostile heroes, roared like a lion.

20.7. Kṛṣṇa simultaneously cut down all the javelins with one arrow. It was simply a miracle, O Prominent Kuru.

2. VJ. takes *Vaijayantī* as 'garland of flowers of five colours' and *Vanamālā* as 'a big garland of flowers and leaves reaching the foot,' but VR regards both as one : *vaijayantyā vana-mālayā saha.*

*The Earth-goddess prayed* :

25. Salutations to you, Oh God of gods, Oh wielder of a conch, a discus and a mace ! I bow to you, Oh Supreme Soul who have assumed form in compliance with the wishes of your votaries.

26. Hail to You, O God with a lotus in the navel (and are thus the cause—creator—of the universe). I bow to You O wearer of the wreath of lotuses (signifying your glorious renown). Salutations to You, O God with lotus eyes (soothing the torments of the world). Bow unto You, O God with lotus feet (deserving adoration and service by the world).

27. Hail to the Lord of (the highest) divine faculties (such as omnipotence etc.), Vāsudeva—the resort of all beings and the All-pervading god Viṣṇu. You are the Supreme Person, present before all the evolutes[1], the Creator (or the Cause) of the Primordial matter (*Prakṛti*). I bow to you, Perfect Spiritual Wisdom incarnate.

28. Hail to you who are yourself unborn but are the Creator of this Universe; who are the Brahman itself of infinite potencies. You are the Inner Controller of the great and the small, the Master of all elements (or created beings), O Supreme Soul.

29.* O Lord when desirous of creating the universe you assume intense form of *rajoguṇa* (viz. the four-headed god Brahmā); for the dissolution of the world you support the *Tamoguṇa* (and assume the form of god Rudra). And for the continuance of the world, you assume the *sattva* (i.e. Viṣṇu form). You are no other than the Time (*Kāla*), the Primordial

1. ŚR. quotes a Śruti text to support this :
*pūrvam evāham ihāsam iti tat puruṣasya puruṣatvam /*

29*. VR : O omnipresent Lord ! When desirous of creation, you do so by entering the body of the four-faced god (Brahmā) characterised by *rajo-guṇa*. For destruction (of the universe) you enter into the person of Rudra, Kālāgni (Fire burning down the universe) etc. who are dominated by *tamas*. For protection of the world, you enter into the bodies of Manu and other in whom *sattva-guṇa* is predominant as well as by incarnating yourself directly. It is due to your presence in *Kāla* (The Time Spirit), Primordial matter (*Prakṛti*) and the individual Soul that you are designated as *Kāla* though distinct from them. VR. quotes :
*aitad ātmyam idaṁ sarvam, tat satyam, sa ātmā —Chāndogya* 6.8.7 etc.

matter (*Prakṛti*) and the supreme Spirit itself—yet you are distinct from them.*

30. You are one without a second. i.e. the earth (and other elements like) water, fire, wind and the sky, the five *tanmātras* (the subtle elements with their qualities such as sound, taste, touch, form and fragrance), the presiding deities over senses, mind, cognitive and conative senses, *ahaṁkāra* (Ego, I-ness), *Mahat* (the Principle of Cosmic Intelligence), the mobile and immobile creation all these are illusions imposed on you.

30-A. *Yande's Bombay edt. adds in the ft. note* (P. 857).

When I was lifted by you, O Lord, in your boar incarnation, this son (Naraka) was born of me in consequence of your contact. So you gave that son to me and now he has been struck down by you.

31. This (Bhagadatta) is his (Naraka's) son. He is afraid and hence I have brought him to your feet, as you remove all the miseries of those who are afflicted. Be pleased to protect him by placing on his head your lotus-like hand which washes off all sins and impurities.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

32. When the glorious Lord was entreated in these words by the goddess Earth in devotion and humility, the Lord vouchsafed him protection and entered the palace of Naraka, full of all affluence.

32A. *VJ.'s text adds*

Having installed him (Naraka's son, Bhagadatta) on his hereditary throne (lit. kingdom) and reappointed his ministers to their respective posts, Hari entered the series of compartments and dwelling units of Naraka's harem.

33. Hari found there sixteen thousand (and one hundred—) daughters of kings (Siddhas, gods, *asuras* etc.-) brought as captives after defeating various kings[1].

29* VB : emphasizes that God transcends the *guṇas*.

VJ. You are Kāla (the Time-Spirit) which gives effect to the Fate (*adṛṣṭa*) of beings. You are called Pradhāna as the exalted-most, Supreme Person and are so designated. *Or* You are *puruṣottama* and hence called *Pradhāna Puruṣa*.

1. ŚR. bases his interpretation on the basis of VP. 5'29.31 (regarding additional one hundred girls) but the second versequoted by him—

34.* Perceiving the great hero among men enter, the damsels were so fascinated with him that they mentally chose him as their desired-most beloved spouse brought to them by their Destiny.

35. "May this hero be my husband. May god Brahmā (or the Creator) approve and grant my prayer." With this devout feeling for him, all of them severally set their hearts on Kṛṣṇa.

36. Śrī Kṛṣṇa sent them all to Dvārakā in palanquins after they had taken their bath and put on excellent clean dress[1]. He also despatched along with them valuable treasure (of precious stones etc.) as well as chariots, horses and immense wealth.

37. Kṛṣṇa sent sixtyfour, white, four-tusked swift-footed elephants of Airāvata's pedigree to Dvārakā.

*VJ.'s Text adds* :

37-A. He gave to Bhagadatta one elephant, called Supratīka out of them and sent the rest to the shed.

38. Having gone to the palace of Indra and restored to Aditi her two ear-rings, he along with his beloved consort Satyabhāmā was worshipped by the king of gods along with his queen Indrāṇī.

39. Importunated by his consort, he uprooted the celestial tree Pārijāta and placed it on (his mount) Garuḍa. After defeating the celestials (who resisted the taking away of Pārijāta), he brought it to his capital Dvārakā.[2]

40. It was planted as an (additional) adornment to the garden of Satyabhāmā's palace. Covetously hankering after

*deva-siddhāsurādīnāṃ nṛpāṇāṃ ca Janārdana /*
*hṛtvā hi so 'suraḥ kanyā rurodha nijamandire //*

is not traced in the Gītā Press edition.

34A.*—VJ.'s reading : Seeing him enter, the damsels who were all youthful, well-ornamented and of attractive features were fascinated with the great hero among men.

1. VT. explains that those girls led an austere life, wearing tawny-coloured clothes observing vows and fasts.

2. VJ,'s text elaborated this episode in two chapters. (ch. 65 and 66) which are translated in the Appendix as chapter 59-I and 59-II.

its fragrance and intoxicating honey, black bees from heaven followed it.[1]

41. Indra touched the feet of Kṛṣṇa with the crests of his crown many times while he bowed to him and begged of him to accomplish his purpose (viz. the recovery of Aditi's earrings, Varuṇa's royal umbrella and others). But once his purpose was achieved, he fought against him. What a great ignorance on the part of gods ! Fie upon that affluence !

42. Later on, the immutable Lord assumed as many forms as the number of damsels (brought from Naraka's harem) and on the same specific auspicious time, he simultaneously yet severally married each one of them in their respective mansions with due formalities (and still remained changeless and perfect).

*VR.'s Text adds :*

42A. Lord Hari grants all the wishes of his devotees. He is infinite and incomprehensible. What is miraculous therein that he was severally and simultaneously present with each of his spouse ?

42B. Lord Kṛṣṇa who is the Supreme of all the masters of Yoga, is still visualized within, without and all around in hundreds and thousand forms by his devotees.

43. In their mansions which surpassed all comparisons and were endowed with super-abundant affluence, the imperishable Lord of incomprehensible activities remained present (all the while simultaneously). Though he was perfectly satisfied with his own bliss, he sported with those *aṁśas* (rays) of goddess Lakṣmī (viz. those newly wedded 16000 damsels) and like other house-holders attended to his house-hold duties.

44. Having obtained the consort of goddess Lakṣmī as their own spouse whose ways (or approaches to whom) are incomprehensible even to god Brahmā and others, those damsels continuously waited upon him with ever-increasing incessant delight, by means of their affectionate smiles, side-glances in their ever-new meetings and their bashful behaviour and speech.

1. This is described in ch. 67 of VJ.'s text which is translated in the Appendix at ch. 59-III.

45. Although hundreds of maid-servants were in their service, each of them personally rendered service to the Lord by rising up and advancing to receive him, offering him a seat and excellent articles of worship, washing his feet, offering betel-leaves, removing his fatigue and refreshing him by fanning, application of sandalpaste and garlands of flowers, and by combing his hair, arranging his bed, bath and catering to him refreshments (or presents) to him.

## CHAPTER SIXTY

*Conversation between Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇi (A Sweet Quarrel)*

*Śri Śuka said* :[1]

1. On a certain occasion, Rukmiṇī, the princess of Bhīṣma was waiting upon her consort, the Creator and the Preceptor of the world who was comfortably seated on her own bed while the maid-servants[2] were fanning.

2. That Unborn Lord, the Controller of the Universe, who, out of sport, creates, protects and destroys this universe,

1. VJ.'s text gives the introductory background in 4 verses.

*King Parikṣit enquired* :

1.1 Every one of the queens of Kṛṣṇa was devotedly attached to him from the bottom of her heart and every one of them was confident in her heart that she was the only beloved-most queen of Kṛṣṇa.

1.2 Was Kṛṣṇa equal to all in his love of them or was he specially attached to one (of them) ? As I strongly desire to know the fact of the matter, be pleased to narrate it to me.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1.3 It is widely well-known to all that out of all his queens, Rukmiṇī, the princess of Bhīṣma, was the senior-most and the Lord was loving her the most of all.

1.4 On one occasion, a love-quarrel with her was provoked by Kṛṣṇa. I shall narrate to you the whole episode. Please listen to it, O descendant of the Kurus.

2. *Vide* verse 7 below.

was born in the race of Yadus for the protection (and enforcement) of the moral ordinances laid down by him.

3-6. O King ! (In her mansion) Rukmiṇī was waiting upon her Consort, the Lord of the three worlds, as he was comfortably relaxing on a cushion, white like the foam of milk, on an excellent couch, in her inner apartment which was beautified with a canopy fringed with strings of lustrous pearls suspended from it and with refulgent precious gems as lamps. It (the apartment) was decorated with flowers and wreaths of jasmine resonant with the swarms of humming bees; it was lit up with silvery moon-beams that entered through the appertures of the latticed windows. From the garden a gentle breeze surcharged with the fragrance of Pārijāta wafted in, while the incense of the fumes of burning aloe wood escaped out of the eyeholes of the lattice.

7. The queen (Rukmiṇī) too from her (female) friend's hand the *chowrie* with a (gold) handle studded with gems and began to serve her Lord by fanning Him with it.

8. She was holding the *chowrie* in her hand adorned with rings and bracelets and was making a jingling sound with a pair of anklets studded with jewels. By the side of Lord Kṛṣṇa, she looked extremely charming with the lustre of necklace reddened with the saffron applied to her bosom covered in her upper garment and with her priceless girdle worn round her waist.

9. Gazing at her who was goddess Lakṣmī herself who was exclusively devoted to him and had assumed a form suitable to the form sportively adopted by him[1], Lord Hari, being very much pleased with her, smilingly spoke to her who appeared extremely charming with her countenance looking all the more beautiful with her curly locks of hair, ear-rings, gold necklace and her face splendidly beaming with nectar-like (sweet) smile.

1. *devatve deva-deheyaṁ manuṣyatve ca mānuṣīn /*
*Viṣṇor dehānur ūpaṁ vai karotyeṣātmanas tanum //*
—VP. 1.9.145.

*The Lord said* :

10. O princess (of excellent beauty and virtue) ! You were desired and sought after by rulers of the earth whose affluence and power equalled to that of the divine protectors of worlds; were endowed with majestic splendour and were far-famed for their wealth, beauty of form, magnanimity and might.

11-12. O lady with beautiful eyebrows ! Why did you reject the prince of Cedi (Śiśupāla) and others who arrived (at your place) seeking your hand and were mad with intense love for you and to whom you were (already) agreed to be offered (in marriage) by your brother and father? Why did you select us who were in no way their compeer—us, who being afraid of other Kings, have sought shelter in the sea, have contracted enmity with the powerful (monarchs like Jarāsandha) and have practically relinquished the royal throne.

13*. O damsel with lovely brows ! Women who (by marrying) follow the path of men whose ways are obscure and who generally follow paths untraversed by the (general) public, generally come to grief.

14. (Women generally approve of the rich even though they may not be good looking.) But we are have-nots and we are generally dear to people who possess nothing (and are poor). Hence affluent people generally do not resort to me, O lady with beautiful waist.

15. (It is advisable that) Marriage and friendship be contracted between those who are equal in wealth, heredity (or family prestige) sovereign power, beauty of form or future prospects but not between the inferiors or superiors.

16.** O princess of Vidarbha ! Without ascertaining the

*. The inner significance of these epithets seems to be as follows (as later brought out in Rukmiṇī's reply).

Women who seek us whose nature is incomprehensible and who do not follow the trodden-orthodox path of action, reach the abode of the Supreme Man. VR and VB give a similar (though somewhat different) explanations.

**Some epithets in the verse have double meaning :

*guṇair hīnaḥ*—without i.e. transcending the *guṇas* (*sattva*, *rajas*)

bhikṣubhir mudhā—who are eulogized by recluses disinterestedly (without any ulterior motive)

*vide infra* Rukmiṇī's reply—verses 34-48.

real situation, we who are really devoid of all qualities but are praised for nothing by beggars, have been selected by you due to your lack of foresight.

17. Even at this stage you may choose some prominent Kṣattriya hero who is suitable to you in every respect. You may thereby enjoy all the blessings both here and hereafter.

18. Kings like Śiśupāla, Śālva, Jarāsandha, Dantavakra and others—why even your elder brother Rukmī also—have been hating me (like an enemy), O lady with beautiful thighs.

19. In order to humiliate the pride of those haughty princes who are blinded with the arrogance of their prowess that you have been brought here by me who have to crush the pride of the wicked.

20. As a matter of fact, we do not hanker after women, children or wealth and are indifferent to the world. We are perfectly satisfied in our blissful Self. We are unconcerned to our body or to our household. Like a lamp we are simply a witness who have nothing to work for.

*Śrī Śuka said*:

21. Having spoken to her thus, the Lord who wished to remove the pride of Rukmiṇī who, due to her continuous association with him, regarded herself the beloved-most spouse of her Lord till then, became silent.

22. It is reported that at that time, on hearing this unpleasant speech, the like of which was never heard before —of her beloved, the Lord of the three worlds, queen Rukmiṇī shuddered at heart, began to tremble and shedding tears, sank into fathomless anxiety.

23. Scratching the floor with her shapely foot beautified with reddish nails, sprinkling profusely with tears darkened with collyrium, her breasts rendered reddish by the application of saffron, she stood there with her face cast down and her speech choked with excessive grief.

24. As her reason became benumbed and lost with excessive agony, fear and grief, the fan dropped from her hand which became instantly so much shrivelled and loose that bangels were slipping from them and her body suddenly became

unconscious and fell down with disheveled hair like a plantain tree uprooted in a stormy wind.

25. Observing that (indescribably powerful bondage of love of his beloved (owing to which) she could not understand the subtle significance of his joke, Lord Kṛṣṇa who was merciful by nature, took pity on her.

26. Quickly springing down from the couch, the four-armed Lord[1] lifted her up and gathering up her locks of hair, gently wiped her face with his lotus-hand.

27. He wiped out her eyes which were full of tears and her breasts soiled with her tears of grief. He hugged in his arms his chaste faithful consort who was exclusively and absolutely devoted to him, O king.

28. The Lord, who knew how to comfort and was past-master in offering consolation and is the last resort of the righteous and the saintly people comforted mercifully his broken-hearted queen whose mind was bewildered with the (harshness of the misunderstood) subtle joke for which she was the wrong target (*lit.* which she did not deserve).

*The Lord consoled* :

29. O princess of Vidarbha ! No. Please do not be displeased with me. I know that you are absolutely devoted and faithful to me. O beautiful damsel ! It is just with the desire of hearing your retort that I spoke that in jest.

30. It was just to behold your charming countenance with its lower lip throbbing with anger through love, with corners of eyes reddened while casting wrathful side-glances and the knitting of your beautiful eyebrows.

31. This is the highest benefit in the domestic life of the householders that they can spend some hours in joking and jesting with their beloved, O beautiful timid lady.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

32. O king ! When that princess of Vidarbha was thus cajoled and comforted in these words by the glorious Lord,

1. The Lord manifested his four arms for the purpose of lifting her up, embracing her, wiping her face etc. ŚR.

she realized that it was nothing but his jocular speech and got over her fear of being abandoned by her dear Lord.

33. Beholding (attentively) the Lord's face through her beautiful affectionate side-glances accompanied with bashful smile, she addressed the most prominent of men, O descendant of Bharata.

*Rukmiṇi said*:[1]

34. Verily, what Your Lordship has said is factually correctnamely that I am not equal and similar to you who are endowed with infinite excellences (like greatness, beauty etc). There cannot be any comparison between you who are ever established in your own greatness, the glorious Lord of the trinity of gods (Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra) and I who am *Prakṛti* (The Primordial Nature) consisting of three *guṇas* (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) and whose feet are resorted to by the ignorant.

35. O Supremely mighty Lord (or Lord of mighty strides in cosmic Form) ! It is true that you, being as it were afraid of *guṇas* (*sattva*, *rajas* or qualities e.g. sound, smell, etc.) abide in the sea[2] (i.e. shine eternally in hearts unfathomable like the sea). Being the Supreme Self of infinite pure consciousness, you are ever hostile to wicked senses (or persons who are controlled by wicked propensities). And sovereignty has been spurned away as a position of blinding darkness by your servants. (Then what of you ?).

1. ŚR. quotes verses enumerating all the epithets Kṛṣṇa used to show his inferiority to Rukmiṇī in his jocular speech above and attempts to show the hidden meaning or the puns used in each which extol the real greatness of Kṛṣṇa as expounded in Rukmiṇī's speech here.

2. VR : What fear can exist for you who covered the three worlds in your strides? It was just to exhibit your intense love for me that you resorted to the sea which has 'sea-ness' like my father, the milky ocean. I being your beloved-most, you love everything related to me.

VJ. *samudra*—Body constituted of five elements. You abide fully refulgent (of the size of a thumb) in the heart of the body consisting of five elements.

36. The paths of sages who enjoy the honey of your lotus-like feet are not clearly understandable (discernible). And to men of bestial nature, they are certainly incomprehensible. Hence the way of their behaviour like that of the Supreme Ruler is extraordinary and supernatural. Such being the case, need it be said that your course of conduct must be much more so, O Almighty Lord.

37. Are you really *niṣ-kāñcana* (a have-not possessing nothing as your own) ? No. For there is none superior to you. Even god Brahmā and others who enjoy (sacrificial) offerings and worship (from others) offer worship to you. Persons who cater to the satisfaction of their senses and are blinded by their affluence do not know that you are the *Kāla*—the exterminator of all. Your worship is the dearmost to gods who enjoy oblations and (reciprocally) they are so to you.

38. You are indeed the embodiment of all the highest) purposes in human life, the very personification of the fruit thereof, with the desire of attaining which the wise and intelligent people renounce every thing, O Almighty Lord ! The association between your worship and them (the master-servant relation)[1] is quite proper. But not so that between a man and a woman who are attached to each other and are subject to pleasure and pain.

39. Your prowess and glory have been extolled by sages who have renounced the staff (the external index of being a recluse). You are the soul of the universe. You are ever willing to bestow your Soul (upon your votaries). Hence I have chosen you rejecting gods like Brahmā, Śiva, Indra whose blessings and positions are shattered down and destroyed by the (vehement) velocity of Time impelled by the slight movement of your brow. What of others (like Śiśupāla, Śālva and others mentioned by you).

40. O elder brother of Gada ! Your words (of having taken shelter at the sea through the fear of kings) are meaningless (as fear is impossible in your case). Oh Lord ! putting to flight all kings by the twanging of your Śārṅga bow, you carried me away like a lion which routing all beasts, appro-

1. VR calls it *Śeṣa-Śeṣī* relation.

priates his own prey. How can it be true that you became afraid of those kings and took shelter at the sea ?

41. Longing for you, great (*lit.* crest-jewels of) monarchs like Aṅga, Pṛthu (the son of Vena), Bharata (the son of Jayantī, the queen of Ṛṣabha), Yayāti (the son of Nahuṣa), gaya and others renounced their undisputed sovereignty over the whole world and entered the forest (for performing penance). Did they suffer here for having taken to the path leading to you, O Lotus-eyed one ?

42. What mortal woman with a clear vision that you, the abode of all excellences, are the real objective in life and has once enjoyed the fragrance of your lotus-feet which are extolled by saints and sages, which grants emancipation from *saṁsāra* to people and are the abode of the goddess Lakṣmī, will disregard them and take resort to another person who is ever subject to the fear of death and *saṁsāra.*

43. I resorted to you, the Supreme Ruler of the worlds, as a suitable partner, my very Soul who grant all wishes here and hereafter. May your feet which liberate from the false *saṁsāra* and protect those who resort to them, protect me who am wandering in the cycle of births.

44. O Imperishable Lord ! Annihilator of enemies ! May the kings (like Śiśupāla and others) listed by you be married to that unlucky woman to whose ears your stories sung in the assemblies of god Śiva and Brahmā, have not reached. For those kings (mentioned by you) behave like a donkey, an ox, a dog, a cat and a menial servant in the homes of their wives.

45. The stupid woman who has not tasted the fragrance of the honey in your lotus-feet will resort as a beloved to a living corpse covered from outside with skin, moustaches, beard, hair on the body, nails and filled inside with flesh, bones, blood, worms, refuse, flegm, bile and wind.

46. O lotus-eyed Lord ! You revel in your own self and you do not cherish any extraordinary outlook (i.e. any special love) for me. May my love to your feet be constant when for the advancement of the world you look at me (i.e. *Prakṛti*) with an excess of *rajas*, that itself is the highest grace on me.

47. O slayer of Madhu ! I do not regard your speech as without significance or false. For sometimes, as in the case of Ambā[1], some girls do set their hearts on somebody else (than the one for whom they are brought to marry).

48. In the case of an unchaste woman though married, her mind hunts after new persons. A wise man should not maintain i.e. marry an unchaste woman, for he falls both here and hereafter.

*The Lord said*:

49. O virtuous princess ! It is only with the desire of hearing this (from you) that you were deceived (by that jocular speech). Whatever you spoke after my speech i.e. the interpretation you have put upon it—is quite true and correct.

50.* Whatever blessings you seek from me shall always be fulfilled as you are absolutely devoted to me, O beautiful lady. But blessings sought from me lead to freedom from desires.

51. Your deep love to your husband and your fidelity to him has been proven, O sinless lady. Though I have tried to move you (and shift your allegiance) with my words, your mind (and fidelity) could not be alienated.

52. Those who, for the sake of conjugal happiness worship me, the bestower of emancipation from *saṁsāra*, by performing penance and observance of vows, and have given their hearts to sensual pleasure, are deluded by my Māyā.

53. Having attained to (i.e. propitiated) me, the Lord and Bestower of Liberation from *saṁsāra* as well as of wealth or worldly pleasures, those who long to have only worldly pleasures from me (and not me their Lord and Bestower) are really unfortunate, O proud lady. For, these pleasures can be obtained even in the hell or lower species of life. To men given to such sensual pleasures, life even in hell would be welcome and suitable.

1. Ambā, a princess of Kāśī, loved the king of Śālva even though Bhīṣma carried her away to marry his step brother Vicitra-vīrya.—*MBH Adi* 102.60-64.

* VJ. Whatever you long to have is always with you already. Hence you do not wish to attain any greatness or power. *Or* Whatever blessing you wish to have, you have it in me.

54. O deity of my house (and wealth) ! How glad I am that you have borne to me a constant attachment and devotion which liberates from *saṁsāra*[1] and which is very difficult to practise for the wicked and still more so for deceitful women actuated by wicked tendencies and given to the gratification of low sensual appetites.

55. O Proud lady ! In all the houses, I have not noticed such a loving wife like you who, at the time of your marriage disregarded all the suitor-monarchs assembled (at your place) and despached a Brāhmaṇa-emissary with a confidential message to me of whom you have merely heard good accounts only.

56. You have patiently borne oft-recurring occasions of grief (caused by us) such as the disfiguration of your brother after taking him captive in the battle (by me), the death of your brother (at Balarāma's hand) while playing at dice (in the gambling hall) on the occasion of (Aniruddha's) marriage.[2]

57. That a messenger with a secret clear-worded message was sent by you to secure me (as your consort), that you felt this whole world as void when (you felt that) I delayed and that then you wanted to cast away your body[3] as not worthy of any other person (except me). This supreme love of yours (is impossible for me to repay) we can receive you gladly, hailing you with joy.

*Śrī Śuka said*:

58. In this way, imitating the human world in such amorous conversation, the glorious Lord of the Universe, though absorbed in his own spiritual Bliss, indulged in love-sport with Lakṣmī (in the form of Rukmiṇī).

59. In the same way, the Omni-present Lord, the Preceptor of the Universe was present severally in the mansions of all other queens as its Master and simultaneously carried out all the duties prescribed for house-holders.

1. Wealth in the form of Devotion characterised by Love which is itself of the nature of liberation from *saṁsāra*—VT.

2. An anachronism : *vide infra* ch. 61. 36.

3. vide Supra 29.36 :

*Yarhyambujākṣa na labheya bhavat-prasādam /*
*Jahyām asūn vrata-kṛśān śatajanmabhiḥ syām //*

## CHAPTER SIXTYONE

*Aniruddha's Marriage : Rukmi Slain*

*Śrī Śuka said :*

1. Each of the above-mentioned queens of Kṛṣṇa bore to him ten sons respectively who were in no way inferior to their father in qualities of head-and-heart.

2. Observing that Lord Kṛṣṇa did not move out of their mansion but was always at home, every one of the princesses, being ignorant of his divine nature, considered herself to be his most beloved wife.

3. Those damsels were enchanted with his countenance charming like a blooming lotus, (knee-) long arms, large beautiful eyes, glances expressive of winning affectionate smiles and sweet conversation, but reciprocally with all the charms at their command, they could not conquer and fascinate the heart of the Perfect One.

4. On the contrary, those sixteen thousand wives of Kṛṣṇa failed to agitate his mind with those shafts of the god of love, and other enticements conveying erotic messages by the movement of their eye-brows charming with the sentiment expressed by their smiles and stealthy side-glances.

*VJ.'s Text adds :*

4A. Even though their Lord occupied a high seat in their personal mansion, out of bashfulness due to their new union in marriage, those chaste and virtuous damsels cast from behind the pillars their side-glances through eyes full of love at their highly beloved consort, the Lord of saintly people, the sole asylum of the goddess of wealth.

4B. They laughed with joy when their eyes were closed from behind with his hands by their beloved while he was enjoying himself in their mansions. But being afraid of disturbing his passion of love for them, they waited only adjusting garments on their person though it may not be pleasant to him.

5*. Having obtained the consort of the Goddess of Wealth and beauty (Lakṣmī) as their own consort, the ways of approaching whom were incomprehensible even to god Brahmā and others those damsels enjoyed with ever-increasing joy and love his affectionate smiles, side-glances with a longing for union felt as ever new.

6. Although hundreds of maid-servants were in their service, each of them personally rendered service to the Lord by rising up, advancing to receive him, offering him a seat and excellent articles of worship, washing his feet, presenting him betel-leaves, removing his fatigue and refreshing him by fanning, application of sandal-paste and garlands of flowers and by combing his hair, arranging his bed, bath and catering to him refreshments.

7. Out of those (sixteen thousand, one hundred and eight) queens of Kṛṣṇa who bore him ten sons each, eight were previously mentioned as principal queens. I shall relate to you about pradyumna and other sons (of these eight queens).

8-9. Pradyumna being the eldest, Cārudeṣṇa, Sudeṣṇa, the chivalrous Cārudeha, Sucāru, Cārugupta, Bhadracāru and his younger brother Cārucandra, Vicāru, Cāru as the tenth—these sons were born of Rukmiṇī. They were in no respect inferior to their father Hari.

10-12. Bhānu, Subhānu, Svarbhānu, Prabhānu, Bhānumān, Candrabhānu, Bṛhadbhānu, and the eighth Atibhānu, Śrībhānu, Pratibhānu—these were the ten sons by Satyabhāmā. Sāmba, Sumitra, Purujit, Śatajit, Sahasrajit, Vijaya, Citraketu, Vasumān, Dravid, Kratu—these were the ten sons of Jāmbavatī. Sāmba and these others were all favourites of their Father.

13. Vīra (*v. l.* Bhānu), Candra, Aśvasena, Citragu, Vegavān Vṛṣa, Āma, Śaṅku, Vasu, Śrīmān, Kunti were the sons of Nagnajitī.

* ŚR. notes that verses 5 & 6 are extremely beautiful and they are an echo of those in a previous chapter (*Supra* 59. 44 & 45 with some modification.

14. Śruta, Kavi, Vṛṣa, Vīra, Subāhu, Bhadra, Ekala, Śānti, Darśa, Pūrṇamāsa, Avara and Somaka were the ten sons of Kālindī.

15. Praghoṣa (*v. l.* Prajaṅgha), Gātravān, Simha, Bala, Prabala, Ūrdhvaga, Mahāśakti, Sahas, Ojas and Aparājita were the sons of Mādrī (Lakṣmaṇā).

16. Vṛka, Harṣa, Anila, Gṛdhra, Vardhana and Annāda, as also Mahāmśa, Pavana, Vahni and Kṣudhi were the sons of Mitravindā.

17. Saṅgrāmajit, Bṛhatsena, Śūra, Praharaṇa, Arijit, Jaya, Subhadra, Vāma, Āyus and Satyaka were the sons of Bhadrā.[1]

18-19. Dīptimān, Tāmratapta and others were born to Hari by Rohiṇī.[2] (She was the chief of the group of sixteen thousand and one hundred queens). A mighty son Aniruddha was born of Pradyumna by Rukmavatī the Princess of Rukmī in the city of Bhojakaṭa (while Pradyumna was there).

As the mothers of Kṛṣṇa's sons were sixteen thousand in number, the sons and grandsons of those sons numbered billions.

*King Parīkṣit enquired* :

20. Oh learned sage ! How is it that Rukmī who was vanquished in combat by Kṛṣṇa and was eagerly waiting for an opportunity to avenge, gave his daughter in marriage to his enemy's son ? Be pleased to narrate to me how the matrimonial alliance came about between these two deadly enemies.

21. For the *Yogins* can accurately and distinctly see the future, the past and the present as well as what is beyond the ken of senses, which is very remote and screened off (by something else).

*Śrī Śuka narrated* :

22. Being the actual embodiment of Anaṅga (the god of Love), he (Pradyumna) was selected by Rukmavatī in her *svayaṁvara* (self-election by the bride-type of marriage). Com-

1. It appears a slip on the part of ŚR. to equate her with Śaibyā-VT.
2. Obviously a similarity of name in the women of the same family.

pletely defeating the assembled kings single-handedly in his chariot, he carried her away.

23*. Although Rukmī, humiliated by Kṛṣṇa, was cherishing enmity against him (but) with a view to please his sister Rukmiṇī, he offered his daughter in marriage to his nephew.

24. It is reported that the mighty son of Kṛtavarmā married Cārumatī, the large (beautiful) eyed daughter of Rukmiṇī.

25. Though still nursing deep hostility to Kṛṣṇa and though aware of the violation of the restrictions of *dharma-śāstra*[1]

23* *Here VJ's Text adds* :

23.1. Rukmī who was humiliated by Kṛṣṇa (by deforming him after defeat) continued to (brood over and) nurse the enmity. By his penance, he propitiated god Śiva abiding on mount Śrī Śaila.

23.2-3. Rudra, the most prominent among boon-conferring gods, was propitiated by Rukmī by performance of penance. He asked Rukmī to seek a boon. He sought for a strong unbreakable bow which will be invincible for hosts of enemies and un-sunderable even to gods. "So be it", said the god Śiva and gave him the bow. But god Śaṅkara cautioned him thus :

23.4. "When you confront god Viṣṇu, this bow will desert you and will return to me. Not otherwise."

23.5 Telling him thus, god Śiva gave him the bow and disappeared. Having secured the boon, the king returned to his capital Bhojakaṭa.

23.6 With the help of the bow, Rukmī brought under his control all kings noted for their prowess in battle. Kṛṣṇa was the only exception.

23.7 With greed of retaining the possession of the bow, Rukmī did not even think of opposing Vāsudeva. Nor did he think of entering into faithful alliance with him, O great king.

23.8 Although he still cherished the enmity, he remembered the words of god Śiva. Pradyumna who was the veritable Manmatha (the god of Love) incarnate, was chosen by Rukmavatī in the *Svayaṁvara*.

23.9 Having vanquished in the battle, all the kings assembled there (for the *svayaṁvara*) single-handedly in his chariot, he carried her away. The great warrior Aniruddha was born of Rukmavatī.

23.10 Being directed by (Uṣā) Bāṇa's daughter, Citralekhā kidnapped him; and on account of him, the thousand-armed Bāṇa became a two-armed one.

1 Śrīdhara notes the popular objection that one should not dine with the enemy (*dviṣad annaṁ na bhoktavyam*) and not the real object of *dharma-śāstra* which discourages in-breeding by prohibiting cross-cousin marriages. VB quotes:

*mātā pitāmahī yasya tathaiva prapitāmahī /*
*tisra eka-kule jātāḥ so'bhiśasto nigadyate //*

in such a matrimonial alliance, Rukmī, with the desire of pleasing his sister to whom he was bound by the ties of affection, gave his grand-daughter Rocanā to Hari's grandson (Rukmī's daughter's son).

26. For the marriage ceremony, Rukmiṇī, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa, Sāmba, Pradyumna and others went to the city of Bhojakaṭa.

27. When the marriage ceremony was over, some haughty kings like Dantavakra of Kaliṅga and others urged Rukmī, "Completely vanquish Balarāma in the play of dice".

28. Though ignorant of the game of dice, Balarāma is strongly addicted to it, O king." Thus advised, Rukmī invited Balarāma to play dice and played at dice.

29. In that game, Balarāma consecutively staked wagers of one hundred, one thousand, ten thousand (coins of gold) and Rukmī won them all. At that time the king of Kaliṅga laughed loudly at Balarāma, displaying his teeth—(an insult) with which Balarāma, the wielder of the plough, could not put up.

30. Then Rukmī staked one lakh (coins) as a bet which Balarāma now won. But resorting to deceit, Rukmī asserted, "I am the winner".

31. Agitated with anger like the swelling ocean under the full moon, the glorious Balarāma whose eyes were naturally reddish, became fiery with extreme rage and he staked a wager of ten crores (of gold coins).

32. As per rules of that game, Balarāma rightly won that bet. But Rukmī resorted to false pretext and said, "I have won the bet. Let the umpires declare their decision".

32-A. *VJ's Text* :

"So be it" said Dantavakra of Kaliṅga showing his teeth (grinning) at Balarāma. Balarāma boiled with rage but (controlled himself and) observed silence.

33. Thereupon a voice from the heaven declared. "As per rules of the game, the wager is properly won by Balarāma. What Rukmī says is false."

34. Ignoring the declaration from the heaven, Rukmī, being instigated by wicked kings and impelled so by his (impend-

ing) death, laughed loudly at Saṅkarṣana (Balarāma) and spoke to him.

35. "You are after-all cowherds ranging over the forests and not experts at the play of dice. Kings like us play with dice and with arrows (i.e. fight) and not persons (cowherds) like you."

36. When thus humiliated by Rukmī and ridiculed by kings, Balarāma flew in rage and taking up an iron bar[1], struck Rukmī down in the assembly of kings.

37. He vehemently caught hold of the (flying) king of Kaliṅga on the tenth pace and angrily knocked out his teeth exhibiting which he laughed at him.

38. Other kings with their arms, thighs and heads broken, chopped off and bathed in blood when struck with the iron bar by Balarāma, fled away in terror.

39. When His brother-in-law Rukmī was slain, Hari being afraid of alienating the relation with his queen Rukmiṇī and brother Balarāma, expressed no remark for or against the incident.

40. Seating Aniruddha along with Suryā in an excellent chariot, Balarāma and others from the Dāśārha clan of whom Lord Kṛṣṇa was the mainstay, and who had accomplished all their objects, left Bhojakaṭa and journeyed to Dvārakā (Kuśasthalī).

## CHAPTER SIXTY TWO[2]

### *Aniruddha taken captive by Bāṇāsura*

*The King Parīkṣit submitted:*

I. The best of Yadus (Aniruddha) married Uṣā, the daughter of Bāṇa. On this occasion a terrible and very great combat took place between Lord Hari and god Śaṅkara. O

1. v.l. with the dice-board-VJ.
2. Not traced in VJ.'s Text.

great yogin! May you be pleased to describe to me in details this episode.[1]

*Śrī Śuka narrated*:

2. Bāṇa was the eldest of the hundred sons of the great-souled Bali who donated in charity the whole of the earth to to Lord Hari who presented himself before him in the form of Vāmana (a dwarf, a Brāhmaṇa boy).

3. Balī's own son Bāṇa was always engaged in devotion to god Śiva. He was respectable, generous, intelligent, true of word and firm in observance of vows.

4. Formerly, he used to rule over his kingdom from the beautiful city of Śoṇitapura[2] as its capital. By the grace of god Śiva even those celestials (the sworn enemies of *Asuras*) behaved with him as his servants. Endowed with a thousand arms as he was, he pleased god Śiva (the world-delighter) by playing upon musical instruments while god Śiva performed his Tāṇḍava[3] dance.

5. The glorious god Śiva, the Lord of all beings, worthy of seeking shelter, who is affectionate to his votaries, asked Bāṇa to seek any boon. Bāṇa begged of him to be the guardian deity of his capital.

1. The Vrindāvan edition records the following verse from the Text of VT. and other commentators of Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇava school.

1A. Bāṇa was the eldest out of the hundred sons of the noble-souled Bali. Being endowed with a thousand arms, he pleased god Śiva by playing on a musical instrument while the latter performed his Tāṇḍava dance.

2. Assames claim Tejapur as the Śoṇitapur of Bāṇa. But the route followed by Kṛṣṇa in his expedition against Bāṇa and its siege etc. (as given in *Harivaṁśa*), show that Śoṇitapur in Kumaun on the back of Kedār-gaṅgā about 6 miles from Uṣāmaṭha near Gupta Kāśi has better claims to be this Śoṇitapur-GDAM p. 189.

3. According to Bharata, the sage Taṇḍu was its initiator. But later as *Śabdārthacintāmaṇi* notes it came to be applied to all male dances and dancing by women was called *lāsya*. It implies violent type of dance in which Rudra indulges at the end of *yugas*. The violent effect of this dance is expressed in the Ist verse (Maṅgala) of *Matsya P.* as follows:

*Pracaṇḍa-tāṇḍavāṭope Praksiptā yena dig-gajāḥ /*
*bhavantu vighna-bhaṅgāya Bhavasya caraṇāmbujāḥ //*

*Matsya P.* 1.1

6. On one occasion, Bāṇa who was madly elated with his prowess, touched with his crown brilliant like the sun, the lotus-feet of god Śiva who (as the presiding deity of his capital) was near to him and said:

7. "I bow to you, O great God, the preceptor and the highest Ruler of the world, the Wish-yielding tree fulfilling the desires of persons whose longings are not satisfied.

8. The (boon of) thousand arms conferred by you have resulted into a burden to me; for I do not find an equal combatant (against me in the three worlds excepting you).

9. With my arms itching for a fight and being impelled by eagerness to combat, I marched against the elephants (supporting the world) at the end of cardinal points, crushing down the mountains on the way. But being terrified, the elephants hastily took to flight, O Ancient-most Person".

10. Hearing this (arrogant speech), the glorious god Śiva got enraged and told him, "When your flag-staff (with the peacock ensign) shall be broken down automatically, your combat with some one equal to me will take place and it will humiliate (break down) your pride, O stupid fellow".

11. Thus snubbed, the Asura with perverse mentality became delighted and repaired to his place. The crooked-minded fellow was waiting for the fulfilment of Śiva's augery which indicated a crushing blow to his prowess.

12. He had a daughter called Uṣā. Virgin as she was, in dream, she enjoyed sexual pleasure with Aniruddha, the son of Pradyumna as her beloved consort whom she had never seen or heard of.

13. Not finding him there near her (after opening her eyes), she got up in a bewildered state, exclaiming "Where are you my beloved lord ?", in the midst of her girl-companions and was exceedingly abashed.

14. Bāṇa had a minister called Kumbhāṇḍa. His daughter Citralekhā was her bosom-friend. Out of great curiosity, she enquired her friend Uṣā:

15. "Whom are you searching for, O friend with beautiful eyebrows ? what is the nature of your desire ? As far as I have observed, as yet there has been no suitor to your hand, O princess."

*Uṣā narrated* :

16. "In my dream I saw an unknown man of dark complexion, lotus-eyed, endowed with (knee-) long arms, wearing a yellow (silken) garment, captivating the hearts of women (capable of enjoying them ).

17. I am seeking after him as my beloved Lord who having allowed me to drink the honey of his lips, has gone (to some unknown place) throwing me into the sea of misery even though I am still thirsty (after him)."

*Citralekhā said* :

18. "I shall remove (the cause of) your grief. If he who captivated your heart exists somewhere in the three worlds, I shall bring that man. Please tell me who it is."

19. Saying thus she drew graphic portraits (of elite youths) of gods, Gandharvas, Siddhas, Cāraṇas, serpents, Daityas, Vidyādharas, Yakṣas and human princes.

20. Out of human beings, she drew the portrait of Vṛṣṇi's : Ugrasena, Vasudeva, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa. When she saw Pradyumna's portrait, she felt shy.

21. Seeing the carefully painted portrait of Aniruddha she looked down in shyness and exclaimed smilingly, "It is he. It is he." O Ruler of the earth.

22. Citralekhā who was endowed with *yogic* powers knew that he was the grand-son of Kṛṣṇa and through the air, she went to Dvārakā under the protection of Kṛṣṇa, O King.

23. Resorting to her *yogic* powers, she bore Aniruddha, the son of Pradyumna, who was sleeping on an excellent bed and brought him to Śoṇitapura and presented her beloved to her friend, Uṣā.

24. Beholding the most beautiful of beautiful persons, she was extremely rejoiced and in her private apartment which was inaccessible to the eyes of males, she enjoyed herself with the son of Pradyumna.

25. He was respectfully received with excellent garments, wreaths of flowers, perfumes, sweet incense, lights, high seat, with drinks, foods and other eatables, with sweet conversations and personal service.

26. Aniruddha who remained concealed in the princess's apartment, got his senses captivated by Uṣā whose love for him was ever increasing and he did not know how many days rolled away.

27. As she was thus enjoyed by the Yādava hero and lost her virginity, the attendants observed through marks which could be hardly concealed, that she was enjoying specially joyous life.

28. The servants reported to Bāṇa, "O King, from the behaviour of your daughter, we mark that she is casting a stain on your family.

29. Though we were cautiously guarding her, we do not know how such pollution took place in the apartment of your virgin daughter who was closely guarded and was beyond the reach of male eyes."

30. Thereupon Bāṇa who was sorely distressed to hear of his daughter's pollution, hastened immediately to the appartment of his daughter and saw there the best of the Yadus.

31. He saw Aniruddha who was the son of Kāma (Pradyumna), the most beautiful person in the world, dark in complexion, wearing a yellow garment, of lotus eyes, long and mighty arms and with his countenance brightened with the lustre of his ear-rings and locks of hair and was beaming with smiling looks.

32. Bāṇa was shocked to see Aniruddha playing at dice with his beloved daughter who on her part adorned herself with festle ornaments—and wearing between his arms a garland of Jasmine flowers, special to the season of spring, tinged with the saffron on her bosom during his contacts with her person seated in front of her.

33. Seeing Bāṇa enter surrounded with fierce looking soldiers, Aniruddha, the descendent of Madhu, took up an iron bludgeon and took position like Yama, the wielder of the rod determined to finish with any body that may approach him.

34. Like a great boar that kicks away the attacking dogs, he struck them down who attacked him on all sides with

the intention of arresting him. Beaten thus by him, they ran out of Uṣā's palace with their heads, thighs and arms broken.

35. The powerful son of Bali got angry with Aniruddha who was striking down his soldiers and he bound him down with *Nāgapāśa* (serpent-like cords).

36. Uṣā was overwhelmed with grief and despondency to see him bound with the cords of *Nāga* and wept loudly with tears flowing down her eyes.

## CHAPTER SIXTYTHREE

*Bāṇa Vanquished. Aniruddha brought to Dvārakā*

*Śri Śuka said* :

1. And thus passed away the four months of the rainy season, while the relatives of Aniruddha, (being unable to trace him) missed him and were grieving for him (for his disappearance), O descendant of Bharata !

2. Learning from Nārada, the report of Aniruddha's valorous fight and his imprisonment , Vṛṣṇis who looked upon Kṛṣṇa as their presiding deity, speedily marched against Śoṇitapura, the capital of Bāṇa.

3-4. Pradyumna, Yuyudhāna, Gada, Sāmba and Sāraṇa, Nanda, Upananda, Bhadra and others—all loyal followers of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa—these prominent Sātvata heroes accompanied with twelve *akṣauhiṇīs* of army, laid close siege to the city of Bāṇa, on all sides.

5. Noticing that the parks of the city, fortifications, gates, balconies and towers were shattereddown, Bāṇa was fired with rage and taking with him an equally strong army, sallied forth out of the city.

6. The worshipful god Rudra surrounded by the Pramathas and accompanied by his son Skanda, rode his big bull and fought with Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa for the sake of Bāṇa.

7. The combat that raged between Kṛṣṇa and Śaṅkara and the duel between Pradyumna and Guha (Kārttikeya) was

tumultuous, astounding and horripilating (making the hair stand on the ends).

8. There was an encounter between Balarāma with Kumbhāṇḍa and Kūpakarṇa; and a duel between Sāmba and the son of Bāṇa, and between Bāṇa and Sātyaki.

9. Great gods like Brahmā and others, sages, Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Gandharvas (celestial singers) heavenly damsels, Yakṣas came in their aerial cars to witness the wonderful battle.

10-11. With sharp-pointed shafts discharged from his Śārṅga bow, Kṛṣṇa put to flight the followers of god Śiva viz. goblins, Pramathas, Yakṣas, Dākinīs, Yātudhānas, Vināyakas, Vetālas, and ghosts, Mātṛkas, Piśācas Kūṣmāṇḍas and Brahma-rākṣasas.

12. God Śiva, the wielder of Pināka bow, discharged various kinds of missiles on Kṛṣṇa, the wielder of Śārṅga bow. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, without expressing any surprise, neutralised each and every missile of Śiva by his counter-missiles.

13. He nullified Brahmāstra with a Brahmāstra, Vāyavyāstra (missile creating stormy winds) with Parvatāstra (a missile surrounding the winds by mountain-like obstacles), the Agnyastra (the fire missile) with the rain missile and Rudra's special Pāśupata missile with his own Nārāyaṇāstra.

14. Then Śrī Kṛṣṇa stupefied god Śiva by making him yawn and lethargic with Jṛmbhaṇāstra (yawning missile) and in the meanwhile slaughtered Bāṇa's army with his sword, mace and arrows.

15. Skanda being pierced on all sides by the streams of arrows discharged by Pradyumna and bleeding in every part of the body, retreated from the battle on the back of his peacock.

16. Kumbhāṇḍa and Kūpakarṇa fell down pounded by the pestle of Balarāma and their armies with their leaders killed, ran away in all directions.

17. Noticing his army shattered and scattered in this way, Bāṇa became extremely enraged. He left his combatant Sātyaki, and in his chariot he rode to and attacked Kṛṣṇa.

18. Simultaneously bending five hundred bows, Bāṇa who was over-proud of his valour, applied a couple of arrows each on each of the bows.

19. The glorious Lord Hari simultaneously snapped all Bāṇa's bows, killed his charioteer, horses and shattered his chariot and blew his conch.

20. Bāṇa had a mother[1] (mother-like presiding deity) called Koṭarā. With a desire to protect the life of her son, she appeared before Kṛṣṇa completely nude with locks of her hair dishevelled.

21. Then (in that situation), Kṛṣṇa turned his face without casting a look at the naked deity. In the meanwhile, Bāṇa whose chariot was broken and bows cut down, retreated to his capital.

22. When all the army of Bhūtas (goblins etc.) fledaway, Jvara (Śiva's fever) having three heads and three feet, rushed at Kṛṣṇa burning down as it were, all the ten cardinal points.

22A. And he appeared in the battle in front of Kṛṣṇa.

23. Thereupon the refulgent god Nārāyaṇa had a look at that Jvara and let loose against him his own (Vaiṣṇava) Fever. In this way the Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite fevers fought with each other.

24. Severely beaten by the fever commanded by Viṣṇu, the Śaivite fever screamed loudly. He could not find any shelter from fear. Being terribly afraid, the fever commanded by Śiva sought refuge with Kṛṣṇa and folding his palm praised him.

*Jvara prayed* :

25. I bow to you, Lord of infinite potency, the controller of great gods (like Brahmā and others), the Soul of all (the universe). One without a second, (of the nature of) Absolute Consciousness, the Cause of the creation, subsistence and dissolution of the universe, you are what is known as the Brahman which is indicated by the Vedas (but not cognised directly), absolutely serene, subject to no modification.

26. (You, being beyond all attributes, are the Lord of all). The Time-spirit (that impels action), Providence (resultant from the *karma* or action), *Karma*, *Svabhāva* (the natural propensities as a result of *Karma*), substance (subtle elements),

1. The name of Bāṇa's real mother was Aśanā. VT clarifies that according to V.P. *Koṭarī* was the family deity of Daityas.

the body, Prāṇa (vital breath called *Sūtra*), the Ego, modifications (viz. eleven senses—10 conative and cognitive senses+1 mind, the internal organ) and the combination of these evolutes called the *Liṅga* or subtle body which sets in motion the stream of cause-effect relation like that of the seed and the tree—all is your Māyā. I seek shelter in you in whom there is negation of Māyā.

27. Sportively assuming various incarnations (as Fish, Tortoise, Boar etc.) you protect the gods, saintly persons who abide by the *dharma* (duties prescribed for their respective class and stage in life) and for their protection you exterminate those who deviate from the righteous path and live by committing violence. This incarnation of yours is intended for lessening the burden of the earth.

28. I am being consumed by the extremely unbearable, terrible, deadly cold fever created by your irresistible energy. Corporeal beings have to suffer, so long as they, remaining enmeshed in desires, do not take shelter at the soles of your feet.

*The Lord said* :

29. "Oh Triśira ! (three-headed fever) I am pleased with you. May your fear from my fear be set at rest. May he who remembers our conversation, be free from fear from you."

30. Thus ordered the Śaivite Fever bowed down to Lord Kṛṣṇa and departed. But Bāṇa mounting his chariot advanced and fought with Kṛṣṇa.

31. Then equipped with various weapons in each of his arm, Bāṇa who was extremely enraged, discharged a volley of arrows on the Lord with the discus as his weapon, O king !

32. While Bāṇa was discharging missiles, the Lord amputated with his discus, the sharp razor-like felly, the arms of Bāṇa, like branches of a tree.

33. While Bāṇa's arms were thus being lopped off, the worshipful god Śiva who was compassionate to his devotee approached Kṛṣṇa and requested him as follows :

*Rudra submitted* :

34. (It is not surprising that Bāṇa fights with you as he is unaware of your real nature, for you are the veritable

Brahman, the Supreme Light lying concealed in the Vedas (which are the Brahman revealed in verbal form). You reveal yourself to sages and hence those sages of pure heart realize you to be all-pervading and pure as the sky and (eternally) absolute.

35. You are indeed the Cosmic Man (*Virāṭ puruṣa*) that comprise within you (as parts of your body) all the universe. Thus the sky is your navel; the fire, your mouth; water, your seminal fluid; the heavenly region, your head; the cardinal points, your ears; the earth, your feet; the moon your mind; the Sun, your eye; myself (viz. Rudra), your Ego (*ahaṁkāra*); the seas, your belly; Indra (and other protectors of the world), your arms;

36. Herbs and plants are your hair on the body; clouds, the locks of your hair; god Brahmā, your intellect; the procreator of the worlds, your generative organ; and Dharma (the god upholding righteousness), your heart. (But this Bāṇa does not know this Cosmic Personality of yours).

37. This incarnation of yours, O Lord of undiminished glory and power (or who stay eternally in Go-loka), is for the protection of righteousness and for the prosperity of the world. All of us (protectors of various spheres) are delegated powers by you and hence we (can) protect the seven spheres of the universe.

38. You are the one without a second, the First Person (beyond all persons belonging to the three states), pure, self-luminous through knowledge, the cause of all but yourself without any cause, the controller (of the universe). Yet you manifest your self through your Māyā as an individual Soul (in every being be it gods, men or subhuman beings) and throw light on everything.

39. O Perfect Lord ! Just as the Sun, covered under his own shadow (viz. clouds, his creation) illuminates both the clouds as well as other forms, you, though the Self-luminous, get concealed under the *guṇas* (viz. Ego) and yet make all the *guṇas* and their products shine (with your light).

40. With their intellect deluded by your Māyā, men are attached to their sons, wives, houses and other belongings and they sink and come up again in the sea of misery (*saṁsāra*).

41. He who, after obtaining this human body (birth) through the Grace of the God, does not worship respectfully your feet, is certainly a self-deceiver fit to be pitied.

42. The mortal man who, for the sake of sense objects which are worthless and hollow, neglects you who are the beloved Soul and the Ruler of the world, consumes poison throwing aside the nectar.

43. I myself, god Brahmā, celestials and sages of pure heart have with all our heart and soul resorted to you who are the most beloved Soul and the controller of the world.

44. In order to get Liberation from *saṁsāra*, we seek asylum in you and worship you who are the cause of creation, subsistence and dissolution of the world, equal to all, serene, a beloved friend and deity. You are One without a second, the only goal, the one abode of all the world.

45. O god, this Bāṇāsura is my dear devotee deeply attached to me and much liked by me. Full protection has been promised by me to him. Therefore, may Your Grace be extended to him as you did in the case of Prahlāda, the king of Daityas.

*The Lord said* :

46. O worshipful Śiva ! We shall comply with whatever you have requested us and what is pleasing to you. Whatever you have decided (about Bāṇa) has my full approval.

47. This Asura is the son of Bali and as such I should not kill him. I have conferred a boon on Prahlāda that none of his descendants would be killed by me.

48. It was just to curb his arrogance that his arms have been lopped off by me. And his big army is annihilated because it was a burden to the earth.

49. The four arms that are left to him (Bāṇa) shall not suffer from age or destruction. From no quarters this Asura need entertain any fear and he shall be your attendant.

50. Having thus secured protection, the Asura bowed to Kṛṣṇa with his head and brought Aniruddha, the son of Pradyumna along with his bride, placing them in a chariot.

51. Placing in the van, Aniruddha and his bride who were clad in excellent dress, decked with ornaments and guarded by an *akṣauhiṇi* of soldiers, Kṛṣṇa set out with compliments from Rudra.

52. He entered His capital (Dvārakā) which was tastefully decorated with flags and ornamental arches, and had its streets and quadrangles thoroughly besprinkled with water. He was warmly received by the citizens, friends, relatives and Brāhmaṇas, with the blowing of conchs and sounding of drums and kettle-drums.

53. He who rising early at dawn, recalls and contemplates on the story of combat between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and god Śaṅkara and Kṛṣṇa's final triumph, will never meet any defeat in life.

## CHAPTER SIXTYFOUR

*The Story of Nṛga*[1]

*Śrī Śuka said :*

1. On one occasion Sāmba, Pradyumna, Cāru, Bhānu, Gada and other princes of the Yadu clan went to a park for sports and entertainment.

2. Having played there for a long time, they felt very thirsty. While in search of water, they found a dry well and noticed a strange animal in it.

3. Observing that it is a lizard as big as a hill, they marvelled in their minds. Moved with pity, they tried to lift it out.

4. The boys tied the animal fallen (in the well) with leather thongs and ropes of fiber but were unable to lift it up.

1. Nṛga, a son of Ikṣvāku, was very famous for his generosity and performance of sacrifices (MBH, *Sabha* 8.8, *Vana.* 88.5-6, 121.1-2). Due to oversight, he gifted a cow twice for which he was cursed to be a chameleon (MBH *Anu.* 70.10-28, also *Vāl. Rām.* 7.24, 7.53).

Overcome with curiosity and surprise, they reported the matter to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

5. The lotus-eyed glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa, the creator and protector of the world, went there (to the well). Peeping at it he sportively lifted it up by his left hand.

6. Being touched by the hand of the Lord of hallowing renown, the being instantly shuffled off his body of a chameleon and was transformed into a heavenly being adorned with wonderful ornaments, garments, and garland of flowers and distinguished by a complexion (bright) like molten gold.

6A. *VJ's Text adds* :

He bowed down to the lotus-feet of Lord Mukunda (Kṛṣṇa) with his head and lay prostrate before him.

7. Although Mukunda (Kṛṣṇa) was omniscient (and as such knew the reason), he enquired of him (the newly transformed god) with a view to making known to the public the cause of his birth in the species of lizards "Who are you, O glorious person blessed with most excellent personality. I believe you must be a great god.

8. My good friend ! What act of yours brought you to such a wretched plight which you certainly did not deserve. We are curious to hear your story. Be pleased to narrate it to us if you deem us worthy of being told."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

9. When the king (Nṛga) was thus accosted by Kṛṣṇa of infinite forms (Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of Bliss), he bowed down to the Lord of Lakṣmī with his crown radiant like the Sun, and spoke:

*Nṛga submitted* :

10. O Lord ! I am a king called Nṛga, the son of Ikṣvāku. My name might have reached your ears if a list of liberal donors has been (at any time) mentioned to you.

11. What is there that is unknown to you who abide as a witness in the hearts of all ? And your vision and knowledge are unobstructed by Time. It is, however, in obedience to your command that I recount my history.

12. I donated as religious gift to Brāhmaṇas as many cows as there are sand-grains on the earth or as many as there are stars in the heavens or as many drops in the showers of rain.

13. All those cows were youthful, milk-yielding, possessed of good nature, of beautiful form and excellent breed. They were tawny in colour, had their horns plated in gold and hoofs in silver. They were gifted along with their calves all duly covered with silk garment, garlands and ornaments. And everyone of them was legitimately obtained by me (by paying their price in well-earned money).

14. I used to give them to youthful prominent Brāhmaṇas possessing excellent qualities and noble character; who, though coming from proverty-stricken families, were noted for their vow of truthfulness and were endowed with penance, learning or knowledge of the Vedas, spiritual lore and generosity.

15. I gave as religious gifts cows, lands, gold, houses, horses, elephants, girls (in marriage) alongwith maid-servants, a lot of sesamum seeds, silver, beds, garments, precious stones, utensils and furniture (necessary) for (unfurnished) houses as well as chariots. I performed a number of sacrifices and constructed wells, tanks and other works of social welfare.

16. (On one occasion) a cow belonging to a prominent Brāhmaṇa strayed and mingled in the herd of my cattle. Not being aware of this, it was gifted by me to another Brāhmaṇa.

17. As the cow was being taken away, the original owner of the cow saw it and asserted to him, "This cow belongs to me". The recepient of the cow as a gift argued, "The cow is mine, for king Nṛga has given it to me as a religious gift".

18. Both the disputant Brāhmaṇas, each trying to establish his claim, (approached me and) said, "You are the donor of the cow to me". The other asserted, "In that case, you have lifted my cow." And I became confused and embarrassed to hear their claims.

19. Caught in such a religious predicament, I tried to conciliate them with a humble entreaty. "I shall give a hundred thousand excellent cows (all better than this). Please give in exchange this cow.

20. Both of you be pleased to condone this fault which has been unknowingly committed by me—your humble servant. Be pleased to lift me up from this difficult situation whereby I shall be falling in a dirty hell.

21. The original owner of the cow declared, "I am not willing to accept (your offer at all) and he left. The other (new recepient owner) went away saying, "I do not wish to have ten thousand cows in exchange for this cow."

*VR.'s Text adds* :

21A. O Supreme Lord ! May be due to your Māyā power or your will expressed through force of time, I died. O Lord ! I narrate in your presence where I was taken away by the force of my destiny.

22. O God of gods ! In the meanwhile (after death) I was carried away by the messenger of Yama to Yama's abode. O Lord of the world ! I was asked there by the god of death :

23. "Would you like to reap the fruit of your evil acts first or would you like to enjoy the fruits of your meritorious acts first. I do not see the limit of the charitable and religious acts performed by you nor of the glorious world that you have attained thereby."

24. I said, "O god ! I shall first suffer for my inauspicious acts". He commanded, "Fall down" and immediately I fell and while falling, I found myself transformed into a lizard, O Almighty Lord.

25. O Keśava ! I am your servant (devotee) who have been friendly and charitable to Brāhmaṇas. I have been earnestly craving and striving to have your direct revelation. It is hence that my memory is still unblurred.

26. O Omnipresent Lord ! You are beyond the ken of sense perception. You are the Supreme Soul to be contemplated and visualized in their pure hearts with the help of the 'eye' (knowledge) of *Upaniṣads* by masters of *yoga*. * (Such as you

are) I am amazed as to how you came directly within the range of my sight—I whose reason is blinded by extreme miseries—for, you are visualized by those who are to be emancipated from *saṁsāra* (Hence I believe I shall be released and this is my last birth).

27-28. O God of gods ! Lord of the world ! O Govinda (protector of cows or master of senses) ? O Supreme Man ! O Nārāyaṇa ! O Hṛṣīkeśa (the Master of Sense-organs; their prime mover) ! O Lord of hallowing renown ! O Infallible Lord ! O Immutable God ! O Kṛṣṇa ! Give me leave to return to my celestial state. O Lord ! (I pray) wherever I may be (i.e. in whatever species I be born) my mind have asylum at your feet.

29. Hail to you the source (creator) of everything ! The Master of Māyā potency ! The final resort (or abode) of all beings ! O Kṛṣṇa,[1] the Lord of all yogas, I bow down to you. (Though I am unwilling to part from you of above description, I take my leave of you to enjoy the fruits of actions conferred upon me by you".

30. Submitting to him this prayer, Nṛga circumambulated him and touched the feet of the Lord with his diadem. With his permission, he ascended an excellent aerial car, even as all people were looking on.

31. Lord Kṛṣṇa ! The son of Devakī, the God who is friendly to Brāhmaṇas—nay the very Dharma *incarnate*—spoke to person around him with a view to instruct those born in Kṣattriya class.

32. "The property of Brāhmaṇas, howsoever little it may be, if misappropriated, is indigestible even to the Fire-god (i.e. a person of immeasurable power and glory like the Fire god); what need be said that it is certainly so in the case of kings who, out of (empty) pride, regard themselves as the rulers (of the world).

33. I do not consider the most deadly poison *Halāhala* as the real fatal poison, as there is an antidote against it. But

1. ŚR. quotes a *Smṛti* (Purāṇic ?) source which interpretes Kṛṣṇa as *Brahman.*

*Kṛṣir bhū-vācakaḥ śabdaḥ ṇaśca nirvṛti-vācakaḥ /*
*tayor aikyam param Brahma Kṛṣṇa ityabhidhīyate //*

the property of a Brāhmaṇa (if misappropriated) is the real poison, as it cannot be counteracted by any remedy in the world.

34. Poison kills (only one person viz.) the swallower. The fire is extinguished with water. But the fire ignited out of churning the *Araṇis* in the form of (misappropriated) Brāhmaṇa property burns the whole race along with its roots.

35. A Brāhmaṇa's property used without his (willing) permission (or with permission under duress) ruins three generations (the enjoyer, his son and grandson). But if usurped and enjoyed per force, it spells disaster to ten generations of ancestors (by forcing them to hell) and ten generation of successors after him.

36.* Kings blinded with the pride of their sovereign power and affluence, are incapable of seeing their own fall. Those kings who regard it good to covet Brāhmaṇa's property which is a veritable hell, are fools.

37-38. Those uncontrolled dictatorial monarchs, their descendants and relatives who deprive Brāhmaṇas of bountiful nature but with large family responsibilities, of their means of livelihood and their property are subjected to torture (*lit.* are cooked) in the hell called *Kumbhipāka*[1] for as many years as the number of particles of earth moistened by the tears shed by those Brāhmaṇas while crying.

39. He who confiscates the means of livelihood of a Brāhmaṇa irrespective of its being donated to him by himself or by another person, becomes a worm in the faeces for sixty thousand years.

40. (I strongly wish that) I may not come in possession of the wealth or property of a Brāhmaṇa (at any time and in any way), by coveting which people are cut short in their prime, kings become defeated and are deprived of their kingdoms and (after death) are born as formidable serpents.

* VR. construes differently: Those kings who regard it good to covet the property of a Brāhmaṇa are blinded by sovereign power and wealth, They do not foresee and think over their falling into the hell. They are extremely stupid.

1. One of the 28 hells in which the wicked are baked like potter's arthen-ware or are immersed in boiling oil.

41. O my kinsmen ! Abstain from hatred or injury (in retaliation) to a Brāhmaṇa who has offended you, attacked you or reproached you (with words of abuse). Always pay them your respects.

42. Just as I bow to Brāhmaṇas regularly with a calm and collected mind, similarly you also salute to them. He who fails to do so, shall be recepient of the punishment at my hands.

43. The property of Brāhmaṇa, even though misappropriated without being aware of it, brings about the downfall of the sinner just as the cow of the Brāhmaṇa brought about the fall of king Nṛga though he was ignorant of misappropriation."

44. Having thus taught (*dharma*) with the actual demonstration (of Nṛga's case) to the residents of Dvārakā, the glorious Lord Mukunda who hallows all (beings in all) worlds, entered his palace.[1]

## CHAPTER SIXTYFIVE

*Balarāma's Visit to Gokula—The Course of the Yamunā diverted*

*Śrī Śuka said*:

1. (On one occasion) the glorious Lord Balarāma became eagerly desirous of seeing his friends and well-wishers (at Vraja). Mounting his chariot, he proceeded[2] to Gokula ruled over by Nanda, O the most prominent Kuru.

1. *Here VJ.'S Text adds*:

44.1 Association with the righteous persons will never fail to bear fruit, O King Parīkṣit. It was by virtue of his companionship with the pious that king Nṛga was released from hell (i.e. hellish life).

44.2 As with sacred places, everything done in relation to the righteous—their sight, touch, glorification, remembrance—brings about purification.

44.3 As you have listened to this, O chastiser of enemies, you should always (try to) adore the saintly people. If you desire to have the final emancipation, the property of a Brāhmaṇa should never be misappropriated by you.

2. *Pra-yayau*—went after wearing the dress of a Gopa (cowherd)—VT. It quotes HV. in its support and informs us that Balarāma went to convey the massage of Kṛṣṇa.

2. Balarāma was warmly embraced by Gopa men and women (at Vraja) who were yearning (to see him) for a pretty long period. He bowed to his (foster) parents Nanda and Yaśodā who welcomed him with blessings (and said):

3. "O Balarāma (of the Dāśārha clan)! May you, the Lord of the universe along with your younger brother Kṛṣṇa, protect us for a long time (just as you do to Yādavas)". With these words, they placed him on their lap, hugged him and bathed him with tears.

4. He paid respects to elderly Gopas with due formalities and was bowed down by his juniors in age. He met other Gopas (observing courteous exchanges) according to their age, friendly intimacy and according to their (respective) relations (with him).

5. He then approached the cowherds,[1] cut jokes and laughed with them, held them by hands, (expressed other friendly gestures). When he had taken rest and was refreshed, they gathered and seated themselves round him as he was comfortably seated.

6. The Gopas who had renounced their worldly pleasures for Śrī Kṛṣṇa of lotus—(petal-like) eyes were enquired about their health and of their relatives in a voice choked with emotions (and in faltering accents). They also reciprocally enquired about the health of Yādavas as per their relations).

7. "Are all our friends and relatives (at Dvārakā) hail and hearty, O Balarāma? Now that you are a married person blessed with children, do you (occasionally) remember us?

8. Luckily the wicked Kaṁsa has been slain and it is fortunate that all our friends and well-wishers are liberated (from his atrocious rule). It is really a matter of good luck that after killing and vanquishing your enemies, you have taken your abode in an inaccessible place (Dvārakā)".

9. Gopīs looked upon Balarāma's visit as an honour and paid respect to him (In spite of their pangs of separation from

1. VT. carefully collects evidence of the visits of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa from VP. & HV. and points out that they used to visit at intervals when they happened to come to that side.

Kṛṣṇa) they beamed with a smile and asked, "Is Kṛṣṇa, the darling of ladies in the city (as against us—rustic women), happy?

10. Does he occasionally remember his friends, (like the Gopa-Dāman and others), father (Nanda) and mother (Yaśodā) at Vraja? Will he come at least once to see his mother (Yaśodā)? Does that mighty-armed Lord ever remember our modest service (or constant devotion to him)?

11. It is for his sake, O Balarāma that we abandoned our parents, brothers, husbands, sons, sisters and relatives whom it was hard to forsake.

12. Instantly he cut asunder the bonds of friendship with us who were so beloved to him and he abandoned us forthwith. (The cause of our not preventing him from going was his fascinatingly sweet) words—what woman would hesitate to put forth faith in them?

13. (Some Gopīs asked): How would the wise and shrewd women of the town trust the words of that fickle-minded and ungrateful person? (Others replied:) When he provokes the passion of love in them by his fascinating words, his winning smiles and enticing looks, those women being overpowered with love, put faith in his wonderful speech.

14. (Some said): O Gopīs! What have we to do with the talk about him? Tell some other stories. (Drop all references to Kṛṣṇa). If his time can pass (happily) without us, our time (reciprocally) can do so without him (though in pangs of separation from him)".

15. Recalling in this way the smiles, sweet words, winsome looks, gait, loving embraces of Kṛṣṇa, those Gopa women wept bitterly.

16. The worshipful Lord Balarāma, past-master in the various ways of consoling, comforted them by conveying to them massages of Śrī Kṛṣṇa which were most soothing to their heart.[1]

1. *Sandeśaiḥ sāma-madhuraiḥ premagarbhairagarvitaiḥ /*
*Rāmeṇāśvāsitā Gopyaḥ Kṛṣṇasyātimanoharaiḥ //*

VP. 5,24.20.

17. The glorious Lord Balarāma spent there (in Gokula) two months (of the spring season)—Caitra and Vaiśākha and entertained the Gopīs at night.

18. Surrounded by a bevy of ladies (Gopīs), Balarāma sported with them in the gardens on the bank of the Yamunā brightly illumined by the rays of the full moon as the gentle breeze charged with the fragrance of night lotuses was blowing.

19. The heavenly beverage called Vāruṇī[1], sent by god Varuṇa began to flow out from the hallow of a tree and filled with its fragrance the whole of the forest.

20. Inhaling the fragrance of that stream of honey (like beverage) wafted by the gentle wind, Balarāma went to that tree and drank it along with the women.

*VR's Text adds* :

20-A. Glorified in songs and himself bursting out in singing in the circle of beautiful women, he sported himself like Airāvata (Indra's elephant) in company of she-elephants.

20-B. Kettle-drums were sounded in the heavens, the heavenly beings showered flowers on them in delight. Gandharvas and sages glorified Balarāma's exploits in great joy.

21. Balarāma (the plough-armed) whose exploits were glorified in songs by the Gopīs, roved in an inebriated condition in the forest, with his eyes swimming in intoxication.

22-23. Adorned with a wreath of flowers and the special garland of five-coloured flowers called Vaijayantī, wearing one ear-ring only, with a smiling lotus-face beautified with dewy drops of perspiration, in an inebriated condition he commanded the Yamunā to come near him to enable him to indulge in water-sports. Being intoxicated, he thought that the Yamunā insolently disobeyed his order. Balarāma got enraged and forcibly dragged her with the pointed plough-share of his plough.

24. (He threatened her) : "You sinful one ! In total disregard for me you indifferently do not come despite my

1. VB. *Vāruṇī*, born while churning the ocean for nectar, was given to demons. Whatever tree she occupies gives out alcoholic beverage. VT. on the authority of HV. says that Vāruṇī was Varuṇa's daughter and hence not forbidden. Likewise she creates the beverage in the hollow of the Kadamba tree.

summons to you, but go your own way. By the tip of my plough I shall now divert you in a hundred ways".

25. When threatened thus, the river-goddess Yamunā became afraid and fell at his feet. Trembling with fear she spoke to the delight of the Yadus.

26. "O Balarāma, the Delight of the world! O mighty-armed hero! I did not know your prowess. O Lord of the world, (I now know) that it is with your one *aṁśa* (part) only, viz. Śeṣa that you support the universe.

27. O Soul of the universe so kind to his votaries! I have come to seek asylum in you, O glorious Lord. It behoves you to set me free (to flow in my own bed) as I did not know your supreme greatness."

28. Thus entreated, the mighty Balarāma then let go the Yamunā. And just like a king elephant entering water with his mates, he entered the waters (of the Yamunā) with the women (Gopīs).

29. After having sported to his hearts content (in the water), Balarāma emerged from her waters when Kānti[1] (a form of goddess Lakṣmī) presented to him two clothes of non-white (blue) colour, highly precious ornaments and an auspicious (brilliant) garland.

30. Putting on those blue garments, wearing the gold necklace, he shone like Airāvata, Indra's elephant, when painted and tastefully ornamented.

31. Even to this day, the Yamunā is seen to flow through the track (river bed) through which the Yamunā was dragged. It is an index of the great prowess of Balarāma of infinite prowess.

32. Balarāma's mind was fascinated with the sweet qualities of the young women of Vraja, so he felt all nights passed in sports at Vraja as one continuous night.

1. ŚR. quotes VP 5.25.16 and states that Kānti is a synonym of Lakṣmī while VT. regards her as a form of Lakṣmī, the Spouse of the second Vyūha Saṅkarṣaṇa.

## CHAPTER SIXTYSIX

*Slaying of Pauṇḍraka and others*[1]

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. When Balarāma had gone to the Vraja under Nanda's control, the ruler of the country called Karuṣa[2] being full of ignorance, sent to Kṛṣṇa a messenger declaring ' I am (the real) Vāsudeva.'

2. "You are the glorious Lord Vāsudeva, the ruler and the protector of the universe who have incarnated (for the protection of the world)". Thus flattered by foolish people, he really came to believe that he was the Imperishable Lord.

3. And the dull-witted fellow (being ignorant of the real greatness of Kṛṣṇa) sent an emissary to Lord Kṛṣṇa of inscrutable ways, at Dvārakā, even as an ignorant boy who is set up as a king by other (equally ignorant) children in children's play would do.

4. The messenger on his part arrived at Dvārakā and conveyed the following message of his king to the Almighty lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa as he was attending the court-assembly.

5. " I am the only one Vāsudeva who have descended (as an incarnation on the earth) for showing compassion to all created beings. There is no other Vāsudeva. Hence you relinquish your false title.

6. O Sātvata ! Whatever emblems of ours (such as Kaustubha Vanamālā, conch, a discus etc.) you bear out of your stupidity, renounce them and come to me for shelter. If not, give a fight with me."

1. The same as Puṇḍra or North Bengal especially district of Malda and the adjoining area-*GDAMI*, pp. 95 & 161.

2. *Kauṭalīya Arthaśāstra* notes its fame for excellent elephants. D.C. Sircar however identifies Karuṣa with Shahabad region of South West Bihar (*SGAMI*-332-35). This explains Pauṇḍraka Vāsudeva's friendship with the King of Vārāṇasī and his stay at Vāraṇasī whence he advanced against Kṛṣṇa.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

7. Hearing that boasting of that puny-minded king Pauṇḍraka Ugrasena and other members of the assembly laughed loudly.

8. After jocular pleasantries, the glorious Lord replied (through the same) messenger. "O fool, I shall hurl my insignia (such as discus, mace etc.) at you, your emblems and supporters on the strength of which you brag thus (*Or* : I shall relieve you of all your artificial emblems like Sudarśana etc. on the strength of which you are boasting).

9. (As to your demand for my submission to you) It is you who will be the resort (prey) of dogs with that (braggart) mouth of yours shut. You will lie down dead on the battlefield surrounded by kites, vultures and other birds of prey, you fool."

10. The messenger conveyed that defiant censure to his master in full details. Śrī Kṛṣṇa also mounted his chariot, went to Kāśī (where Pauṇḍraka was staying with his friend, the king of Kāśī).

11. Hearing the intelligence of Kṛṣṇa's invasion, even the mighty car-warrior Pauṇḍraka quickly sallied forth from the town (Kāśī) with two *akṣauhiṇīs* of army under his command.

12. His friend, the king of Kāśī followed him to guard his rear with his army of three *akṣauhiṇīs*, O king. Hari espied Pauṇḍraka :

13-14. Who (Pauṇḍraka) was bearing the (replicas of Kṛṣṇa's arms such as) the (Pāñcajanya) conch, the (Nandaka) sword, the (Kaumodakī) mace, the Śārṅga bow; was distinguished by the Śrīvatsa mark (on the chest), was wearing (an artificial) Kaustubha gem and was decorated with Vanamālā. He was clad in two pieces of yellow silk and had an ensign of Garuḍa (on his chariot); he was adorned with a priceless crown and very costly ornaments and was wearing two radiant ear-rings of alligator-shape.

15. Seeing him seated (in the chariot) with an artificial dress similar to His own like an actor on the stage, Lord Hari burst into a heavy laugh.

*VJ.'s Text adds* :

15A. The battalion of archers of the king of Kāśī, equipped with strong bows, covered Kṛṣṇa with arrows within a moment, just as rain-clouds cover a mountain with water. Some of them were seated on elephants, some on horses and some mounted in chariots, all of them marched forward to the battle-front.

16. The enemies (mercilessly) attacked Hari with darts, maces, iron bars, javelins, *ṛṣṭis* (double-edged swords) different kinds of spears e.g. *Tomara*, swords and arrows.

*VJ.'s Text adds* :

16A. Another king, a friend of the ruler of Kāśī came to his help with three *akṣauhiṇis* of army, in that battle.

17. Just as the cosmic fire bursting forth at the end of *yugas* completely consumes all the categories of creatures, Śrī Kṛṣṇa with his mace, sword, discus and arrows, totally annihilated the armies of Pauṇḍraka and Kāśirāja consisting of elephant-divisions, cavalry, chariots and foot-soldiers.

18. That battlefield was scattered over with (parts and limbs of) chariots, horses, elephants, foot-soldiers, donkeys and camels which were cut down and amputated by his discus. Like the terrible dancing arena of Rudra, the battlefield shone, heartening only the brave.

19. Kṛṣṇa, the descendant of Śūra, (sarcastically) said to Pauṇḍraka, "O Pauṇḍraka, whatever weapons you asked me to surrender through your messenger, I now discharge at you.

20. I shall make you give up my epithet which you have falsely assumed, you ignorant fellow. And if I were not to desire to fight with you, I would seek you as a Protector today".

21. With this sarcastic reply (with reference to Pauṇḍraka's message with his emissary), he deprived Pauṇḍraka of his chariots with his sharp shafts. And just as Indra lopped of the tops (or wings) of mountain, he sundered off the head of Pauṇḍraka with his discus.

22. Similarly, he chopped off with his arrows the head of Kāśirāja from his body and made it fall down in the city of Kāśī like a lotus bud carried with it by wind.*

23. Having thus killed the jealous Pauṇḍraka along with his friend Kāśīrāja, he entered the city of Dvārakā while his nectarlike sweet exploits were being glorified in songs by Siddhas.

24. Due to the continuous contemplation of Hari, all the (Karma) bondages of Pauṇḍraka were completely annihilated. As he always put on a form similar to that of Hari, he became one with Hari.

25. Seeing the head adorned with ear-rings fallen at the palace-gate, people were puzzled as to what it was and whose head it was.

26. When they came to know that it was the head of their own king, queens, princes, relatives and citizens of Kāśī lamented loudly "Alas. We are undone. O king, O dear Lord, O Lord".

27-28. His crown Prince Sudakṣiṇa performed the funeral rites of his father. He determined, " I shall repay the debt of my father by killing his slayer". Sudakṣiṇa along with his family priest propitiated god Śiva with the deepest meditation.

29. In the holy place of Avimuktaka (or Kāśī), god Śiva who was pleased with him, offered him the boon (of his choice). He sought his desired-most boon, viz. the means to slay his father's slayer.

30-31 (Lord Śiva advised) : 'You should worship the fire known as *Dakṣiṇāgni*[1] (which is also called *ṛtvij*)[2] with the help of Brāhmaṇas according to the procedure prescribed for mastering black magic. That fire surrounded by Pramathas (goblins) will accomplish your purpose like a family priest (*ṛtvij*) appointed for a purpose, provided it is used against a person who is hostile to Brāhmaṇas and is hated by them. (This implies a warning not to use it against a friend of Brāhmaṇas like Kṛṣṇa). Observing strictly the prescribed vows, Sudakṣiṇa obeyed the directions of Śiva (for invoking the malevolent aspect of Dakṣiṇāgni) and directed it against Kṛṣṇa.

1. Out of the three fires maintained in the family, *Dakṣiṇāgni* is to be propitiated for the worship of manes and mastery over black magic (*abhicāra*).

2. *ṛtvij* is an epithet of Agni. vide ṚV 1.1.1 This is one interpretation.

32. As soon as the *abhicāra-prayoga* (sacrifice for mastery over black magic) was completed, there arose from the sacrificial pit, god Agni in person, but in his very terrific form. The locks of his hair, beard and moustaches were of red-hot copper. He was emitting flames of fire from his eyes.

33. He had a very grim appearance with large protruding tusks and staff-like long eyebrows. He was licking the ends of his mouth. He was naked and was brandishing a trident that threw out flames of fire.

34. Surrounded by goblins and setting ablaze all the cardinal points, he rushed against Dvārakā shaking the earth under his strides, with his legs tall as a palm tree.

35. Seeing that *Abhicāra* (malevolent) fire rushing towards them, all the citizens of Dvārakā were terribly afraid like wild beasts at the approach of the forest conflagration.

36. While the glorious Lord was playing dice in the assembly-hall, they ran to him overwhelmed with fear and prayed, "Protect us, O Lord of the three worlds, protect us from the fire that is burning the city".

37. Listening to the (report of that) public calamity and seeing the cause of their panic, the Lord, who is the shelter of his devotees, laughed loudly and assured them : Don't be afraid. I shall be your saviour".

38. The Almighty Lord who is a witness to whatever happens within and without all created beings, came to know it to be the *Kṛtyā* (female form of the malevolent force) of god Śiva and commanded his discus Sudarśana that was by his side, to destroy her.

39. The Sudarśana discus, the missile discharged by Lord Kṛṣṇa was dazzling like millions of Suns (combined). It was flaming forth like the cosmic fire destroying the universe (at the end of *yugas*). It was radiating its brilliant lustre in all directions, the heaven and the earth. It forthwith extinguished that *Abhicāra* fire.

40. Counteracted by the force of the missile (Sudarśana) of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the *Abhicāra* fire called *Kṛtyā* had all its force curbed down and blunted. As if slapped in the face, it turned back, approached Vārāṇasī and burnt down Sudakṣiṇa and his family-priests who directed the *Kṛtyā*.

41-42. Close on its heels, the discus of Viṣṇu entered the city of Vārāṇasī and reduced it to ashes along with its high towers, assembly halls, mansions, market places, towers, enclosures, treasuries, arches, stalls for elephants, horses, chariots, dining halls and kitchens and returned to Dvārakā again and stood by the side of Kṛṣṇa who does everything sportively.

43. The mortal being who listens to this attentively or relates this exploit of the most glorious Lord to others becomes completely absolved of all sins.

*VJ.'s Text adds* :

43A. Both of them (the narrator and listener of exploits) rid themselves of all sins including heinous ones like Brahmahatyā and when they cast off their body, they proceed to the heaven of Lord Viṣṇu.

## CHAPTER SIXTYSEVEN

*Balarāma slays Dvivida*

*King Parikṣit said* :

1. I long to hear again of the wonderful deeds of Balarāma, the possessor of infinite, immeasurable power and miraculous feats. Please narrate what other wondrous deeds he performed.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

2. There was a monkey called Dvivida, a friend of Narakāsura. He was a counsellor of Sugrīva and a brave and powerful brother of Mainda.

3. In order to avenge the death of his friend Naraka, he caused a great havoc in the country by setting on fire cities, villages, mines and cowherds' camps.

4. Sometimes he uprooted the hills and completely reduced to powder the whole of the Ānarta[1] country where Hari, the slayer of his friend, was living.

1. Western Gujarat with Dvārakā as its capital.

5. He was possessed of the strength of ten thousand elephants. Some times he used to stand in the midst of the sea and create a high tide by dashing up volume of seawater with his arms and drown the coastal area under water.

6. The wicked fellow broke down big trees in the hermitages of the great sages and desecrated the sacrificial fires with urine and excreta.

7. Like a wasp imprisoning a worm the naughty monkey shut up men and women in the valleys and caves of mountains and blocked their entrance with big stones.

8. In this way he wrought havock in the country and ravished women of noble birth. Once, hearing sweet enchanting music, he went to the Raivataka hill.

9. There he espied Balarāma, the Lord of Yadus, wearing a lotus-garland, charming in every limb, standing in the midst of a bevy of beautiful damsels.

10. While singing he was drunk with Vāruṇī and his eyes were swimming with intoxication. He had a brilliant personality and looked like an elephant exuding ichor.

11. The wicked monkey climbed the boughs of the trees and shaking the trees heavily made a chattering sound to attract their notice to his presence.

12. Beholding the insolence of the monkey those young damsels, the spouses of Balarāma, being fickle by nature and fond of fun, burst out into a heavy laughter.

13. In the teeth of Balarāma's presence, the monkey began to insult the damsels by twisting his eyebrows, making wry faces at them and showing them his hind part. Balarāma, the foremost among warriors, got enraged and hurled a big stone at the monkey.

14. But that wily monkey evaded the stone and (swooping down from the trees) took away the pitcher of wine (from Balarāma) and ridiculed Balarāma by laughing loudly and provoking Balarāma's wrath.

15. The wicked monkey dashed down the pitcher of wine, tore the clothes of women. Being puffed up with pride, he treated Balarāma with utmost contempt and caused him excessive annoyance.

16. Seeing his mischievous and arrogant behaviour and considering the havoc caused by him in the country, Balarāma flew in rage and took up his pestle and plough in hand, in order to kill the enemy.

17. Dvivida too was endowed with great strength. He uprooted a Śāla tree with his hand and rushing with great vehemence at Balarāma, struck his head with the tree.

18. The mighty Balarāma stood firm like a mountain. He caught hold of the tree (as its blow was) falling on his head and hit Dvivida with the pestle called Sunanda.

19. With his head crushed with the pestle, it became covered with a stream of blood. Dvivida shone with the torrent of blood like a mountain covered with a flow of liquid red chalk. In spite of that, he did not mind Balarāma's stroke.

20. He again pulled out another palm tree and removing all its leaves by dint of his physical power, he hit Balarāma in rage. But Balarāma splintered it into hundred pieces.

21-22. The monkey again struck him down with another palm tree which Balarāma cut into hundreds of pieces. Fighting in this way with the glorious Lord, he pulled out a palm tree to strike which was broken to hundreds of pieces. Uprooting trees on all sides, he denuded the forest into a treeless tract.

23. Being enraged, he discharged a shower of rocks on Balarāma all of which the wielder of pestle as his weapon, reduced to powder.

24. The leader of monkeys clenched his palm-like long arms into fists and approaching the son of Rohiṇī (Balarāma), he hit his chest with both the fists.

25. The ruler of Yādavas also threw down his pestle and plough and angrily hit with both of his hands on his (Dvivida's) collar-bones. And he fell down vomitting blood.

26. O king Parīkṣit (a tiger among the Kurus) ! As Dvivida fell down, the whole of the mountain along with its peaks and trees began to shake like a boat tossed with a tempest in the sea water.

27. There arose in the skies shouts of victory, salutation and approbation : 'Well-done', 'Well-done', from gods, *Siddhas*, prominent sages who were sending forth showers of flowers.

28. Killing in this way Dvivida, the scourage of the land (rendering it desolate), the glorious Lord Balarāma entered his city while he was being glorified in songs by the citizens.

## CHAPTER SIXTYEIGHT

*Hastināpura dragged by Balarāma*

*Śri Śuka said* :

1. O King Sāmba, the son of Jāmbavatī, who was always victorious in battles, carried away Duryodhana's daughter Lakṣmaṇā, at the time of her *svayaṁvara*.

2. Kauravas were extremely enraged at this, "This is a naughty boy. Setting us at nought, he per force carried away our daughter who did not want him (as a suitor).

3. Arrest and keep in confinement this unruly, wicked fellow. What can the Vṛṣṇis do? They are enjoying that territory conferred upon them by us and that too through our grace (we are the real masters of that land).

4. If, after hearing of the captivity of their son, they come here, the Vṛṣṇis will sue for peace with their pride humbled down like senses brought under control by breath-control (*prāṇāyāma*)."[1]

5. With this resolve, Karṇa, Śala, Bhūri, Yajñaketu and Duryodhana

5A. *VJ.'s Text* :

Along with Duḥśāsana, Śakuni who always gave wrong and wicked advice—all these disregarded Vidura and glorious Gāndhārī. . .
and with the approval of the Kaurava elders (like Bhīṣma) attempted to bind Sāmba.

6. Noticing that he was being pursued by Kauravas, the great chariot-warrior Sāmba, took up his beautiful bow and stood defiantly like a single lion turned at bay.

1. v.1. like serpents whose fangs are removed.—VJ.

7. Enraged and eager to take him captive, they shouted, 'Stop', 'Stop'. And under the leadership of Karṇa, those archers covered him with a volley of arrows.

8. Though surrounded by Kauravas, that scion of the Yadu race, the son of the incomprehensible Lord Kṛṣṇa, did not tolerate them like a lion attacked by insignificant beasts.[1]

9-10. Twanging his beautiful bow, he pierced simultaneously each of the six chariot-warriors like Karṇa and others, with equal number of shafts. He struck the four horses; with four arrows, the charioteers and the great archers in the chariots with one. All of them applauded his exploit.

11. Attacking him simultaneously, they deprived him of his chariot, each Kaurava warrior killing one of his four horses one his charioteer and the remaining warrior snapped his bow.

12. With great difficulty the Kauravas dislodged him from the chariot and took him captive. Victorious they entered their capital, with the boy as well as the maiden.

13. Hearing the news from Nārada's report, Yādavas got enraged, O King. And under the direction of Ugrasena, they made preparations of an expedition against the Kauravas.

14. But Balarāma pacified the Vṛṣṇi warriors who made full preparations of war. He was disposed to wash away the dirt (bitterness) of quarrels. He did not wish that there should be a feud between Kauravas and Vṛṣṇis.

15. In a chariot resplendent like the sun, he went to Hastināpura. He was accompanied with Brāhmaṇas and elderly persons of the family like the moon surrounded by planets.

16. Arriving at Hastināpura, he camped in a park outside the town. He deputed Uddhava to Dhṛtarāṣṭra to ascertain what they intended to do in the matter.

17. Uddhava formally paid respects to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the son of Ambikā, Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Bāhlīka and Duryodhana and intimated to them the arrival of Balarāma.

1. v.l. He did not put up with the insult like a serpent beaten by a stick.

18. They were highly pleased to hear that Balarāma, their best friend had arrived. They warmly received Uddhava and taking into their hands auspicious presents, they went to Balarāma.

19. Approaching him they received him with due formalities and honours offering him *arghya* and a cow. Those of them who knew of his prowess bowed down Balarāma with their heads.

20. Hearing that their respective relatives were hale and hearty and enquiring after their welfare and health and such friendly talk, Balarāma declared fearlessly.

21. 'Listen attentively to what His majesty Ugrasena, King of kings, commanded you : Carry out his orders without delay.

22. (We hear) that a great many of you unjustly (according to the rules of warfare) combined and vanquished Sāmba who was fighting singlehandedly (as per canons of *dharma-yuddha*) and have taken him captive. With the desire of maintaining amity among relatives, I do tolerate this. (But now immediately bring him to us along with the bride)."

23. O Parīkṣit, Kouravas became deeply indignant to hear the speech of Balarāma who was endowed with immense power, prowess, energy and whose words expressed his inner strength. They said :

24. "O ! How wonderful it is ! Due to the inexorable force of time, a shoe covets to ride over the head that is served by a crown.

25. These Vṛṣṇis are related to us by conjugal ties (through Kuntī's marriage in our family). Condescended to share with us the bed, seat and food, the Vṛṣnis are raised to royal status like us and are favoured with a royal throne.

26. It is due to our indulgence that they enjoy the royal insignia like *chowries*, fans, a conch, a white umbrella, a crown, a throne and a bed.

27. Now enough of those royal insignia to Yadus who go against their very donors like serpents made to drink nectar (Let us deprive the Yadus of those emblems) who prospered due to our grace are now giving orders to us shamelessly.

28. How could even Indra dare to take what is not given to him by Kauravas like Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Arjuna and others ? Can a ram dare to touch what is in the grasp of a lion (unless he gives it up out of grace) ?"

*Śrī Śuka said* :

29. Being elated with inordinate pride of their noble birth, their high relations, prosperity, those wicked unmannerly Kauravas addressed unspeakable words within the hearing of Balarāma and returned to their city.

30. Observing the wicked behaviour of Kauravas and hearing their unspeakable reproaches, Balarāma became indignant with wrath and was terrific to look at. Laughing loudly, he repeated to himself :

31. "Verily these wicked persons grown madly arrogant with pride of various kinds, do not desire to have peacefulness. Just as (beating with) a stick is the sure remedy to tame a beast, sound thrashing is the only means to bring these round.

32. It is after slowly appeasing the excited Yadus and indignant Kṛṣṇa that I came here with the intent of bringing about a peace with the Kurus.

33. These dull-witted wicked fellows are naturally inclined to quarrelling. These arrogant fellows have not only treated me scornfully but have used extremely reproachful words to me.

34-35. To them King Ugrasena, the ruler of Bhoja, Vṛṣṇi and Andhaka clans is not a sovereign ruler. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of goddess Lakṣmī whose orders are obeyed by Indra and other Lords of Spheres, He by whom the celestial assembly Sudharmā is occupied and the heavenly tree Pārijāta is brought (on the earth) and is enjoyed (according to these fellows) does not deserve a high royal seat.

36. Lord Kṛṣṇa whose pair of feet are directly worshipped by goddess Śrī in person, the Controller of all beings does not deserve the royal insignia (according to them).

37. The royal throne is extremely insignificant to him the dust on whose lotus feet is borne on the crowns of their heads by all the Lords of the various worlds (in the universe) and which sanctify sacred waters (like those of the Gaṅgā)

resorted to by holy men; and we—that is god Brahmā, Śiva, I (Saṅkarṣaṇa), and even goddess Śrī are but a part of His ray and always bear those particles of dust (on our heads).

38. We, Vṛṣṇis, enjoy the piece of land granted to us by Kurus ! And we are nothing better than shoes and the Kauravas themselves the head !

39. What person capable of meting out punishment to others can tolerate the harsh and irrelevant words of those who are drunk with power and wealth and have become intoxicated and insolent ?

40. Today I shall rid the earth of all the Kurus". With this determination, enraged as he was, Balarāma lifted up his plough as if to burn down the three worlds.

41. With the tip of the plough-share, he lifted up the whole city of Hastināpura and angrily began to drag it intending to throw it into the river Gaṅgā.

42. The city that was being dragged and falling into the Gaṅgā, began to rock like a boat. Finding the city so dragged, Kauravas were utterly confounded with consternation.

43. Anxious to save their lives along with those of their families, they placed forward Sāmba and (his spouse) Lakṣmaṇā and with folded palms sought shelter of that very Lord (Balarāma whom they had insulted).

44. 'O Balarāma, O Rāma. You are the support of all. We did not know your prowess. It behoves you to pardon the transgression committed by us who have been foolish and wicked-minded.

45. (You being the substratum of all) you yourself are perfectly independent but you are the cause of the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe. It is true when they say that the three worlds are your toys and you are the player.

46. (Referring to the original state of Balarāma as the Serpent Śeṣa, the support of the worlds:) It is you ! O Ananta (Serpent Śeṣa) of thousand heads, who easily hold up this globe of the earth on your head. At the end of the universe, you withdraw the universe within yourself and contain it. And repose on the cosmic waters as the only remaining unabsorbed existence without a second.

47. O glorious Lord ! You assume the *Sattva guṇa* with the intention of maintaining and protecting the world. Hence your anger is only for teaching a lesson to all and not out of hatred or jealousy.

48. We bow to you who are the Inner Controller of all creatures, O omnipotent and immutable Maker of all ! We have sought asylum in you. We offer our salutations to you.

*Śri Śuka said* :

49. Balarāma was thus propitiated to be gracious (unto them) by Kauravas who sought his refuge, for they were terrified as their capital city was rocking. Being highly pleased with them, he assured them protection with the words, 'Do not fear'.

50-51. Duryodhana was very affectionate to his daughter. As presents, he (Duryodhana) gave twelve hundred elephants, each sixty years old (in its prime of youth) and ten thousand horses, six thousand goldplated chariots shining like the sun and one thousand maid-servants each adorned with gold necklaces.

52. Glorious Balarāma, the prominent Sātvata, accepted it all and complimented by his friends and well-wishers, he set out with his son (Sāmba) and the daughter-in-law.

53. Returning to his capital Dvārakā, Balarāma met all his affectionate relatives and in the assembly of prominent Yādavas narrated what he did in the Kaurava country.

54. Even to this day the city shows the evidence of the exploit of Balarāma as it is elevated to the South and slopes down towards the Gaṅgā.

## CHAPTER SIXTYNINE

### *Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Household Life*[1]

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. Having heard that Narakāsura was killed and that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, a single individual as he was, married those numerous women, Nārada became eager to see how Kṛṣṇa managed to live with them all.

2. It is really miraculous that one person (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) possessing a single personality, could severally and simultaneously marry sixteen thousand women, each in a separate house.

3. Being curious to know this, the divine sage Nārada came to see this to Dvārakā which appeared beautiful with its parks and gardens in full blossom and was resonant with the notes of singing birds and humming of the swarms of bees.

4. It was resounded with the sweet warblings and melodious notes of swans and other waterbirds which swarmed the surrounding ponds and pools covered with full blown lotuses, lilies, *Kalhāras* and lotuses that bloom by day and by night.

5. (Nārada came to Dvārakā) which was thickly studded with nine hundred thousands of palatial buildings constructed with crystals and silver and was shining with excellent emeralds thickly set therein and furnished with articles (of furniture) plated with gold and adorned with jewels.

1. VJ.'s text introduces this chapter with three additional verses. It is after the 3rd verse of VJ. that the texts of ŚR and VJ. agree as from verse 1 above.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1.1 Having vanquished all his enemies, Śrī Kṛṣṇa stayed there a number of days enjoying himself with those excellent women in this way.

*King Parīkṣit asked* :

1.2. How could one person—Janārdana—who has assumed a human form, give satisfaction to those sixteen thousand queens?

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1.3 Well. I shall narrate to you what may make the listeners wonder, as to how that one person Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave satisfaction to all the numerous queens.

6. The city looked beautiful with its streets, roads, quadrangles and market places in the city distinctly laid out ; with stalls, assembly-halls and shrines dedicated to gods. The roads, court-yards, foot-paths and threshholds of the city were profusely sprinkled with water. The heat of the sun in that city was warded off by everflying flags and pennants.

7. In that city, there was (a complex of palatial buildings known as) the harem of Lord Kṛṣṇa which was highly praised by all the presiding deities protecting different spheres (in the universe). In constructing that (palatial building complex), Tvaṣṭṛ, the celestial architect had exhibited all his architectural skill and ingenuity.

8. That part of the city was adorned with sixteen thousand palatial buildings of Kṛṣṇa's queens. Nārada entered into one of the big palaces out of them.

9. It was supported on columns of coral and the ceiling was of *Vaidūrya* (a precious stone). Its walls were of sapphire and its floor of unfading lustre was paved with the same precious stones.

10. It was also furnished with canopies specially designed by Tvaṣṭṛ from which wreaths of pearls were hanging and it (was provided) with seats and beds made of ivory and set with excellent jewels.

11. It was staffed with maid-servants adorned with necklaces of gold-coins and wearing costly apparel and with men-servants wearing coats, turbans, excellent dress and diamond-ear-rings.

12. O child Parīkṣit. Darkness in that place was dispelled by the lustre of clusters of jewels radiating light like lamps. In them, peacocks perching in picturesque (artificial) caves screamed loudly and danced gaily regarding (foolishly) the clouds of fumes of aloewood issuing out of the windows, to be the real clouds.

13. The Brāhmaṇa sage Nārada saw there Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Sātvatas who was being fanned with a *chowrie* provided with a gold handle by his consort who in her turn was waited upon constantly by a thousand maid-servants who were all equal (to each other) in nature, beauty, age and excellent dress.

14. On seeing him, the glorious Lord, the foremost among those who observe the injunctions of Dharma, promptly got up from the bed of Rukmiṇī (the goddess Śrī), paid respects to his feet with his head adorned with a diadem. With folded palms, He made Nārada occupy his own (exalted) seat.

15. Though he himself was the Creator and Preceptor of the universe and the chief among the righteous, he washed Nārada's feet and bore that water on his own head. The epithet *Brahmaṇya-deva* (God who is friendly to Brāhmaṇas) is most appropriately applicable to him both in its implication and as a title. For the waters that wash his feet (viz. the river Gaṅgā) sanctifies the rest of the world.

16. Having worshipped the prominent divine sage (Nārada), the Ancient sage Nārāyaṇa, the friend and companion of the sage Nara, addressed him in measured words sweet like nectar and requested "O Lord Nārada! what service should we render to you?"

*Nārada said*:

17. "O almighty Lord! It is not at all wonderful in you who are the Protector of all the worlds that you entertain friendliness to all people as well as chastise the wicked (there is no contradiction in both these roles). You incarnate yourself at your own sweet will for conferring final Beatitude as well as for the maintenance and protection of the world. We realize this quite well, O Lord who are extolled as the highest one in the Vedas.

18. I have the good fortune of being blessed with the sight of the pair of your feet which in themselves are the blessed state of final Emancipation and which deserve to be meditated upon in their hearts by gods of unfathomable spiritual wisdom like Brahmā and others and which form the support to those who have fallen in the (dark) well of *saṁsāra* as a means to get out of it. (Hence I have accomplished my purpose). You, however, be pleased to favour me with unfailing, constant memory of your feet contemplating on which I shall move about in the world."

19. Thereupon, in order to fathom and know the Yogic power of the Lord of the masters of Yoga, that sage Nārada entered the mansion of another queen of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

20. Even there he found Kṛṣṇa playing dice with his beloved consort Satyabhāmā and Uddhava. He was worshipped with utmost devotion by Kṛṣṇa by rising up to receive him, offering a comfortable seat and such other formalities.

21. Nārada was enquired of by Kṛṣṇa showing as if he was not cognisant of Nārada's arrival. He asked, "When did you come, O worshipful sage? We are after all imperfect beings. What service may we render to perfect (or persons established in the Self) sages like you?

22. O Brāhmaṇa sage! Be pleased to order us and make this life of ours blessed (by giving us an opportunity to serve you)". Nārada was extremely surprised. He rose up without a word and went to another house (of another queen of Kṛṣṇa).

23. Even there, he saw Lord Kṛṣṇa playing and fondling with his infant sons. Then in another house (of another queen), he saw him preparing for his bath.

24. At some houses, Nārada saw him offering oblations to sacrificial fire, at other places, he was seen worshipping God by performing five kinds of daily sacrifices (called *mahāyajñas*); at some houses, he saw him feeding the Brāhmaṇas with a feast and at another place, he found him taking food after offering oblations to the sacred fire.

25. At some houses, he was performing *sandhyā* (twilight prayer); at other places, he was contemplating the Gāyatrī observing complete silence. At some places, he was practising various skills in fencing with a sword and a shield.

26. At some other houses, he found Kṛṣṇa the elder brother of Gada riding horses, elephants or chariots. At some other mansions, he found him lying in bed while being extolled by bards (*bandins*).

27. In a certain house, he was holding consultations with his counsellors like Uddhava and others; while at other places, surrounded by a bevy of courtesans, he was indulging in water-sports.

28. At some houses, he found him giving highly adorned cows to prominent Brāhmaṇas, while at others he saw him listening to the auspicious stories from *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇas*.

29. In a certain house, he was laughing by telling a joke to his beloved; in other places, he was carefully attending to Dharma, while at other places he was looking after matters pertaining to finance and at other places he was indulging in personal enjoyment.

30. At some houses he saw him sitting alone in meditation contemplating on the Supreme Lord transcendental to *Prakṛti*; at other places, he found him waiting upon the elders and the preceptors by offering them objects of enjoyment and articles of worship.

31. At some places, he was planning war against some kings, while at other places, he was negotiating peace; at some places he was conferring with Balarāma about the well-being of the saintly people.

32. At some place, he saw him celebrating the marriages of his sons and daughters at the proper age with brides and bridegrooms suitable to their status and royal fortune.

33. People were wonderstruck to see the enthusiasm of that Lord of Yoga in conducting festivities at the time of giving send off to children or welcoming those who returned (for example daughters going to their husbands' houses or returning therefrom after a long stay).

34. Sometimes he saw Kṛṣṇa worshipping all gods with elaborate sacrifices. Sometimes he was seen engaged in performing the *pūrta* duties of religion by digging wells, founding groves, constructing temples, etc., for public weal.

35. At some places, he saw Kṛṣṇa riding a pedigree horse from the Sindhu country and chasing a game. Sometimes followed by Yādava warriors, he hunted animals useful for sacrifice.

36. Somewhere he found him moving about *incognito* among his subjects, their houses, harems etc. with a view to understand the real feelings and plans of the people.

37. In this way, after observing this exhibition of Kṛṣṇa's vast Yogic powers, though he was following the human way of life, Nārada addressed him with a smile.

38. "O Lord of Yoga! Your Māyā is incomprehensible--nay not even easily cognisable—to the masters of Māyās.

But through the service of Your feet, our hearts are filled with the spiritual light. And we can comprehend your Yoga Māyā.

39. O Lord Kṛṣṇa ! Be pleased to give me leave. I shall range all over the worlds overflowing with your glory, celebrating in songs your sportive acts which sanctify the world."

*The Lord replied* :

40. "Oh Brāhmaṇa sage. I am the promulgator of Dharma. It is I who practice it and grant my approbation to it. I have descended on this world for teaching it by my example. You need not get troubled, O child."

*Śri Śuka said* :

41. It is reported that Nārada saw one and the same Kṛṣṇa (present in all the houses of Kṛṣṇa's queens) performing the righteous duties of householders which purify them.

42. Having observed time and anon the vast display of the Yogic powers of Kṛṣṇa of infinite prowess, the sage who became formerly curious about it, was overwhelmed with great astonishment.

43. Nārada who was duly worshipped by Śrī Kṛṣṇa who showed His faith in *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*, the three objects of human life, was greatly pleased with him. And constantly contemplating upon him only, he went his way.

44. O King ! Following in this way the course of conduct as a human being, Lord Kṛṣṇa assumed different forms for the prosperity of the whole of the world; worshipped by the sixteen thousand beautiful damsels with their bashful, affectionate looks and smile, he spent his life delightfully (at Dvārakā).

45. He who celebrates in songs, listens to or expresses approbation for the exploits of Hari which it is impossible for others to perform but which Hari, who is the cause of creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe, has done, will get engendered in him the devotion to the Lord Almighty which will lead to the Final Beatitude.

## CHAPTER SEVENTY

*Kṛṣṇa's Daily Observances : Deputation from Captive Kings of Jarāsandha*

*Śrī Śuka said :*

1. Now, at the approach of the dawning day, the queens of Mādhava, each of whom was sleeping with the arms of their Lord round their necks, cursed the cocks crowing at dawn, as they were nervously anxious about their (prospective) separation from him.

2. Aroused from sleep by the breezes wafting through Mandāra groves while the black bees were humming sweetly, birds began to sing and warble like bards to wake up Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

3. Closely hugged within the arms of her lover, even Rukmiṇī would not tolerate that extremely auspicious period (called *Brāhma muhūrta*) for fear of separation from his embrace.

4. Getting up in the *Brāhma* period (two hours before the sun-rise), Śrī Kṛṣṇa would wash his hands and feet and rinse his mouth. Sipping three spoonfuls of water as *ācamana*, he with a serene mind, used to meditate on the Self (*ātman*) who is beyond the range of darkness (i.e. *Prakṛti*).

5. He used to contemplate upon *Ātman* also designated as *Brahman*, Who is one without any limiting condition (*upādhi*), self-luminous, immutable; Who has been eternally free from the taint of *Avidyā* (Nescience) by virtue of His being established in His own self ; Whose existence and blissfulness of nature are revealed by His own potencies that bring about the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe.

6. After meditation, he took bath in clean water after Śāstric injunctions. Putting on two garments, he performed the Twilight-prayer (*Sandhyā*), and other (prescribed observances. The prominent one among the righteous persons then offered oblations to sacrificial fire and silently repeated the *Gāyatri mantra.*

7. He used to offer prayers to the rising sun and pour out water libations to gods, sages, his ancestors (*pitṛs*)—all of

whom were his own rays—and with a controlled mind, he used to worship the elderly persons and Brāhmaṇas.

8-9. To Brāhmaṇas who were adorned with ornaments, along with silken cloth, deer-hide (*Kṛṣṇājina*) and sesamum seeds, he used to give every day thirteen thousand and eighty-four cows, all of them docile, with horns capped with gold tops and hoofs plated in silver and necks adorned with pearl-necklaces, yielding abundant milk, with only one freshly yeaned calf, accompanied by their calves, beautifully caparisoned.

10. He used to pay respects to cows, Brāhmaṇas, elderly persons, preceptors and all beings who were his own manifestations, and he used to touch auspicious things (like a towny coloured cow, etc.).

11. He himself was one of the ornaments of the world. He used to adorn himself with his special garments (e.g. yellow silken loin cloth or *pītāmbara*) and adornments (e.g. the *Kaustubha* gem) and his special excellent garlands (e.g. the *Vanamālā*) and pigments.

12. Seeing the reflection of his face in liquid ghee and a mirror and cast his (first) glances at cows, bulls, Brāhmaṇas and gods, he used to take delight in granting the boons and desired objects to people belonging to all classes inhabiting in his city or dwelling in his harem (alike), and satisfying their requirements by supplying the needs of his counsellors and courtiers.

13. He would first distribute garlands, betel-leaves and sandal-pastes to Brāhmaṇas; then he would honour his friends, ministers and queens with them, and lastly he would accept them for himself.

14. By that time, the charioteer used to bring his most wonderful chariot drawn by Sugrīva and other horses and bowing down to him, he used to stand before him.

15. Thereupon, holding the charioteer's hand by his own, he used to mount his chariot along with Sātyaki and Uddhava, like unto the sun ascending the eastern mountain.

16. Gazed at by the ladies in the harem with their bash-

ful and affectionate looks and permitted unwillingly by them, he would proceed captivating their hearts with his bewitching smiles.

17. O king Parīkṣit then surrounded by all Vṛṣṇis, he would enter the assembly-hall called Sudharmā the occupants—members—of which are not subject to six 'waves' i.e. changes in human life (viz. hunger, thirst, grief, delusion, old age and death).

18. Seated there on an excellent, exalted throne, the Almighty Lord shone illuminating all the cardinal points by his personal lustre. Surrounded by lion-like prominent Yadus, Kṛṣṇa, the best of Yadus, appeared like the moon in the midst of the hosts of constellations and stars.

19. O King ! There, the court-jesters waited upon the Lord by providing amusements of various kinds. So did the masters indancing with their manly dances as well as dancing girls with their special performances severally.

20. Bards — *sūtas*, *Māgadhas* and *Bandins* danced, sang and extolled him in accompaniment to tabors, lutes, tambourines, flutes, cymbals and conchs.

21. There were seated some Brāhmaṇas well-versed in the exposition of the Vedas. They elucidated Vedic verses as well as told the stories of ancient kings of sanctifying glory.

22. There arrived a stranger not ever seen before. With the permission of the Lord, he was ushered in his presence by the guards at the door.

23. Having bowed to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, he, with his palms folded, submitted to him the miserable plight of kings who were kept in captivity by Jarāsandha.

24. Those twenty thousand kings who did not submissively acknowledged Jarāsandha's sovereignty during his conquest of all the quarters (of the world), had been taken captive per force and are incarcerated at Girivraja (mod. Rajgir in Bihar).

(The message of the detained kings :)

25. "O Kṛṣṇa who attract the minds of devotees and of incomprehensible nature. You are the destroyer of the fear of those who seek resort in you. We are of poor intellect and are mortally afraid of *Saṁsāra*. We seek asylum in you.

26. We bow to that ever-vigilant Time-Spirit viz. you who are all powerful and who suddenly cut short the desire for long life of this world while it is deeply involved in doing prohibited acts and is careless and negligent in performing auspicious actions such as your worship and devotion as enjoined by you.

27. O Lord, You are the controller of the Universe. You have incarnated in this world by a ray of yours (i.e. Balarāma) for the protection of the righteous and chastisement and destruction of the wicked. We do not understand how somebody else (like Jarāsandha) transgresses your orders (with impunity) and why persons (though protected by you) still take to the path of their *Karmas* (and experience misery).

28. The happiness of Kingship contingent as it is on so many conditions, is an empty dream. We carry on the burden of *saṁsāra* (and the anxiety and responsibility of wife, children, etc.). with our body which is as good as dead and stands constantly in fear of death. We are extremely miserable inas much as we abandon the spiritual bliss which is obtainable from you by those who renounce all desires and undergo miseries due to (the inexorable force of) your Māyā.

29. The pair of feet of your Lordship destroy the miseries of those who surrender to them humbly. We are at present imprisoned. Be pleased to set us free from the bondage of *Karma* now called Jarāsandha, the king of Magadhas. Possessed as he is of the strength of ten thousand elephants, he singlehandedly took us, kings, captive and imprisoned us in his palace as a king of beasts (a lion) would do to sheep.

30. O Lord with uplifted discus (*Sudarśana*), Jarāsandha who was defeated by you eighteen times in the battle, has grown insolent by somehow defeating you in one of them. Though you possess infinite prowess you behave like a human being. But Jarāsandha is grinding us, knowing us to be your subjects. O unconquerable Lord, May you be pleased to do whatever you think proper to do (under these circumstances).

31. (The messenger concludes:) Thus the kings who are imprisoned by Jarāsandha are desirous of seeing your Lordship.

They have submitted themselves to the soles of Your feet. Be pleased to bestow happiness on those hapless kings.

*Śri Śuka said* :

32. While the messenger of the kings was thus delivering the message of the kings, there manifested like the sun, the divine sage Nārada of supreme lustre, wearing gold-coloured matted locks of hair.

*VR.'s Text* :

32A. Nārada entered singing of the exploits and incarnations of his beloved Kṛṣṇa making Kṛṣṇa, his followers and the world as if melt (with the sweet music) and filling them with great delight.

*VJ.'s Text* :

32B. (Nārada came in) singing in sweet voice and expressions the delightful acts and incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa liquidating heaps of sins and filling the world with extreme joy.

33. Seeing him, the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Ruler of the rulers of the worlds, rose from his seat and bowed him with his head with great delight, along with the members of the assembly and his followers.

34. Having worshipped him with due formalities and seating him comfortably, he addressed him in sweet words, pleasing the sage with his devotion and sincerity.

35. He enquired, "Are all the three worlds now free from fear from all quarters? It is certainly a great advantage to us that your worship ranges over all the worlds (as we are thereby in a position to know what goes on in the world).

36. To be sure, nothing is unknown to you in all the creation of the Lord. We, therefore, enquire of you what Pāṇḍavas now intend to do.

*Nārada replied* :

37. O All-pervading almighty Lord, I have witnessed to a great extent a variety of your deluding potencies (*māyās*)[1]

1. VT : *Māyās* i.e. the creations or products of these *māyās* viz. a number of Brahmāṇḍas with all various gods such as Brahmās, Viṣṇus who possess their own *māyās* which are nothing but the powers imparted to them by you.— I have witnessed these etc.

which are inscrutable and insuperable, and which delude even god Brahmā, the great conjuror, the creator of the universe. O Perfect one ! By your powers you abide in all created beings and yet you remain with your splendour undisclosed like fire remaining latent in the logs of wood. (Although you are omniscient, you assume ignorance like a human being). Hence your query causes me no surprise.

38. Who is capable of knowing comprehensively what you intend to do, for you create as well as destroy this universe by your Māyā Potency. The universe appears to exist due to your Māyā (though it is unreal). I bow to you who are in essence distinct from everything else and are thus of incomprehensible nature.

39. O Lord ! I seek asylum in you who have enkindled the brilliant lamp (beacon-light) of your glory by sportively assuming various incarnations. This light is for those *jivas* who wander in the cycle of *saṁsāra* and do not know the way to Final Emancipation from the bondage of the body which is the source of all evil.

40. Though yourself the Supreme *Brahman*, you imitate the ways of human beings in the world. I, however, report to you what king Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of your paternal aunt and your devotee plans to do.

41. King Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Pāṇḍu, aspires to be a sovereign ruler of the world. He, therefore, wishes to worship you with Rājasūya, the greatest of all sacrifices. You may therefore, be pleased to grant your approval (to their plan).

42. Gods, sages and illustrious kings will certainly attend that grand sacrifice with eagerness to see you.

43. O Lord ! Even (*cāṇḍālas* and other) outcastes become purified by listening to your stories, muttering your name or glorifying you and by contemplating on you who are Brahman *incarnate*. What need be said of those who perceive you directly and come in personal contact with you ?

44. Your glory which is absolutely pure has enveloped like a canopy all the quarters and has spread out all over the heavenly regions, the earth and the subterranean regions and it renders the world absolutely pure. O Lord ! Your very presence is auspicious to the world. The waters that wash your feet

are known as the *Mandākini* in the heavens, the *Bhogavati* in lower regions and as the *Gaṅgā* in this world and they hallow the universe.

*Śri Śuka said* :

45. When Yādavas, the clansmen of Kṛṣṇa, being fired with the ambition of vanquishing Jarāsandha were not in a mood to approve of Nārada's words (but insisted on an expedition against Jarāsandha) instead of going to Rājasūya. Kṛṣṇa smilingly spoke in soft words to Uddhava, his devoted and loyal servant.

*The Lord said* :

46. "You are our best eye, a well-wisher and knower of the crux of political deliberations. Therefore, advise us what we should do under the circumstances. We believe in you and shall abide by your advice."

47. When thus called upon to tender advice by his Master, the Omniscient Lord, as if he were an ignorant person, Uddhava respected his order with his head, bowed down and replied (as follows) :

## CHAPTER SEVENTYONE

*Śrī Kṛṣṇa's visit to Indraprastha*

*Śri Śuka said* :

1. Having heard the words of the divine sage Nārada, and considering the views of the members of the assembly and that of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the greatly intelligent Uddhava spoke as follows :

*Uddhava said* :

2. O Lord ! As advised by the sage Nārada, you should render help to your cousins (sons of your paternal aunt) in the

performance of that sacrifice and also should extend protection to those (kings in the captivity of Jarāsandha) who desire to seek your shelter.

3. O Almighty Lord ! It is only the conquerer of all the cardinal points who is eligible to perform the Rājasūya sacrifice.

*VR.'s Text adds* :

3*A*. We should at first set out from this place to go to Indraprastha. It is there (at Indraprastha) that with Yudhiṣṭhira's permission, you should slay Jarāsandha for the sake of Yudhiṣṭhira. Hence, in my opinion, victory over the son of Jarā (i.e. Jarāsandha) will serve both the purposes.

4. We shall be achieving our great object by this act (of vanquishing Jarāsandha). And great glory will accrue to you by setting at liberty those imprisoned kings, O Govinda !

5. (To Yādavas who are eager to kill Jarāsandha, Uddhava cautions :) In physical strength that king (Jarāsandha) equals ten thousand elephants and as such, is irresistible to others who (regard themselves and actually) are mighty, except Bhīma who is his equal in strength.

6. It is only in a single combat that he can be conquered and not otherwise (with a powerful army), as he commands an army of one hundred *akṣauhiṇīs*. He is friendly to Brāhmaṇas. And when requested by Brāhmaṇas, he would never refuse it.

7. Let Bhīmasena assume the guise of a Brāhmaṇa and approach him to beg of him single-handed combat with himself. There is not the slightest doubt that in your presence Bhīma will certainly kill him in that duel.

8. You are the formless Time-spirit who, as the Supreme Lord, are the real cause of the creation and destruction of the universe, while gods Brahmā and Rudra are mere instruments. So Bhīma will be the mere instrumental cause of killing Jarāsandha while (as a matter of fact) you are the real slayer.

9. (When Jarāsandha will be killed) the queens of those (released) kings will sing in their (respective) palaces your glorious act in slaying their own (common) enemy (who imprisoned their husbands) and of setting at liberty their husbands (who are dear to them as their own selves), just as Gopīs sing

of their deliverance (from the demon Śaṅkhacūḍa;) sages who resort to you for shelter glorify you for the rescue of the king of elephants (from the alligator), and the release of Sītā, the daughter of Janaka (from Rāvaṇa's captivity) and we who are protected by you, sing of your exploit in setting free your parents (Vasudeva and Devakī from the imprisonment of Kaṁsa).

10. O Kṛṣṇa ! The killing of Jarāsandha will tend to serve many great objectives (purposes) with the fruition of the meritorious acts of the kings (resulting in their release and re-instatement on their thrones), and the fructification of the evil acts of Jarāsandha (resulting in his death and that of Śiśupāla as well). For performance of the Rājasūya sacrifice meets your approval.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

11. O King ! This counsel tendered by Uddhava was so correct and good in every respect that the divine sage Nārada, Yādava elders and Śrī Kṛṣṇa as well, expressed their approval of it.

12. Thereupon the all-pervading glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, sought the permission of his elders and preceptors and ordered his servants like Dāruka, Jaitra and others to prepare for the journey.

13. Having sent in advance, the ladies of his harem, sons, attendants and their kit, and after getting the formal permission of his elder brother Balarāma and Ugrasena, the king of Yādavas, Śrī Kṛṣṇa mounted his chariot brought to him by his charioteer and distinguished with the flag bearing the emblem of Garuḍa, O chastiser of enemies.

14. Thereupon, surrounded with his formidable army comprising of chariots, elephants, foot-soldiers and horsemen and led by their respective military leaders, Kṛṣṇa set out from Dvārakā filling all the quarters with the brilliant fanfare and tremendous sound of the beating of tabors, drums, kettledrums, conchs and horns or trumpets.

15. The devoted and virtuous queens of Kṛṣṇa, all clad in excellent garments, adorned with precious ornaments, pigments and garlands and well-guarded by attendants armed with

swords and shields--followed their husbands along with their sons in golden palanquins and vehicles borne by men and drawn by horses.

16. Mounting on vehicles and litters drawn by men, and on camels, oxen, buffaloes, donkeys, mules, carts and elephants and packing and loading their portable shelters of thatched cottages and tents, woollen blankets, cloths and other articles of their kit, on both sides of the animals, the attendants (of Kṛṣṇa) and courtesans all well-adorned, travelled in his train.

17. Like unto the sea grown agitated with roaring high waves and restless whales, the enormous army, dinning with loud noise and with its lofty flags, big banners, umbrellas, *chowries*, excellent weapons, ornaments, diadems (or helmets) and armours, was shining brilliantly under the bright rays of the sun.

18. Thereupon, the sage Nārada who was worshipped by Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Yādavas, felt all his hearts and senses deeply satisfied and happy at the sight of Mukunda. After listening to his decision and accepting the reception offered to him, he bowed to Kṛṣṇa and meditating upon him (and thus installing him in his heart) he left Dvārakā, soaring up in the sky.

19. (When Nārada left) the Lord promised the messenger in a kindly tone : "O messenger ! You need not be afraid. May good betide you ! (I shall see to it that) Jarāsandha, the king of Magadhas, be killed."

20. Thus assured by the Lord, the emissary departed and reported in details to the kings all that happened. The kings longed to get their freedom restored and eagerly looked forward to Kṛṣṇa's actual appearance.

21. Having travelled through Ānarta[1], Sauvīra,[2] and Marus[3] and also Vinaśana[4], he crossed over mountains and rivers and passed by towns, villages, cowherd-settlements and quarries.

1. Gujarat and part of Malwa—GDAMI, p. 7.

2. N.L. De accepts Alberuni's identification of Sauvīra with Multan and Jahrawar—Ibid, p. 183.

3. Marwar, a part of Rajasthan—Ibid, p. 127.

4. Near modern Sirsa in Kurukṣetra or Brahmāvarta—the land between the Sarasvatī and the Dṛṣadvatī—SGAMI, p. 49.

22. Later on, after crossing the river Dṛṣadvatī (Mod. Ghaggar) and the Sarasvatī, he passed through the Pāñcāla country and the Matsya[1] region and arrived at Indraprastha.

23. Hearing the report of the arrival of Śrī Kṛṣṇa whose sight is very rare to ordinary human beings, king Yudhiṣṭhira who was friendly to all, was highly delighted and went out of the city (to receive him) along with his family priests and accompanied with his friends and well-wishers.

24. In the symphonic combination of vocal music (glorifying Kṛṣṇa in songs) and instrumental music and with the loud chanting of the *Vedas*, he eagerly approached Lord Kṛṣṇa just as senses do (i.e. are revived instantaneously) after the return of the chief *Prāṇa* (vital breath).

25. Having seen Śrī Kṛṣṇa, his dearest friend and relative after a long time, the heart of Pāṇḍu's son (Yudhiṣṭhira) melted with deep affection and he embraced him again and again.

26. Embracing with both of his hands the Person of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the sacred abode of the goddess Lakṣmī, the king Yudhiṣṭhira was purged of all sins. With his eyes overflowing with tears and the hair of his body standing on ends, he felt highly blessed and forgot all the delusions about the world.

27. Beaming with a smile and with all his senses and mind overwhelmed with the force of (overpowering) affection, Bhīma embraced his maternal cousin (son of his maternal uncle) and enjoyed great felicity. Arjuna and the twins Nakula and Sahadeva, with profuse tears of joy embraced Acyuta[2], the best of their friend and well-wisher.

28. Embraced by Arjuna and paid due respects by Nakula and Sahadeva, Kṛṣṇa saluted Brāhmaṇas and other elderly persons according to their seniority and other worth.

29-30. Paid respects by them, Kṛṣṇa reciprocally honoured Kauravas, Sṛñjayas, Kekayas, bards like Sūta and Māgadha

1. The territory of Jaipur including Alwar and some part of Bharatpur —GDAMI, p. 128.

2. SR. explains : While Arjuna bent to bow Kṛṣṇa, being equal in age, Kṛṣṇa held him up in his embrace while he was bowed down by Nakula and Sahadeva, his juniors.

and celestial singers, bards and court-jesters[1] praised him while others played upon musical instruments, like tabors, conchs, lutes, drums and horns or trumpets, danced and sang.

31. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the crest-jewel among persons with hallowing renown, was thus accompanied by friends and well-wishers who were eulogizing him. With them he entered the well decorated city of Indraprastha.

32. The roads of the city were sprinkled with scented water and the ichor that exuded from the temples of elephants in rut; it was decorated with variegated flags, golden arches and pitchers full of water (at the entrance of houses); it appeared beautiful with its well-washed citizens wearing new silken garments, ornaments, wreaths of flowers and perfumes as well as with young-women who were equally well-dressed, adorned and anointed in pigments.

33. Kṛṣṇa saw the capital of the king of Kurus (Yudhiṣṭhira) teeming with houses that were illuminated with a row of big lights, offerings of flowers, etc. It was charming on account of the latticed windows out of which were issuing out scented fumes, and flags were merrily flapping on the house-tops which were decorated with domes of gold pitchers surrounded with big crests of silver.

34. As soon as the young damsels heard of his arrival, they immediately abandoned their domestic work and even their husbands in bed and flocked to the royal road (the main street) to see the one object worthy of drinking with (the goblets in the form of) eyes by the people, even though due to their eagerness to see him and in their haste, their locks of hair got dishevelled and the knots of silken garments, loose.

35. Women who climbed the terraces of their houses saw Kṛṣṇa along with his queens on the road that was crowded with elephants, horses, chariots and footmen. They showered flowers over him and embraced him with their hearts and extended a warm welcome to him with their profusely smiling looks.

1. The annotators differ slightly in assigning these musical activities among sūtas—upto Brāhmaṇas and court-jesters. VT. is uncertain, hence VR is followed.

36. Observing the queens of Mukunda (Kṛṣṇa) on the road accompanying their husband like constellations of stars surrounding the moon, the women of the town remarked to each other : (We don't know) what meritorious act must have been done by these consorts of Kṛṣṇa whereby this excellent-most personality (of Kṛṣṇa) extends (offers) delight to their eyes with his noble smiles and winsome amorous looks.

37. In the town, at every stage, citizens with auspicious things in their hands, approached Kṛṣṇa and worshipped him. So did the leaders of trade-guilds rid themselves of all sins.

38. Warmly received by ladies of the harem with their eyes blooming with joy and excited with eagerness, Kṛṣṇa entered the palace of the king Yudhiṣṭhira.

39. When Kuntī beheld her brother's son Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the three worlds, her heart was full of delight and affection. She got up from the couch along with her daughter-in-law Draupadī and hugged him (affectionately).

40. Having brought Kṛṣṇa, the God of gods to his palace, with respect and devotion, king Yudhiṣṭhira was so beside himself with joy that he could not understand how to proceed with the formalities of worship (of such a respectable guest).

41. O king Parīkṣit ! Śrī Kṛṣṇa, however, bowed down to his paternal aunt Kuntī and paid respects to elderly ladies. He himself was bowed down by Draupadī and his sister Subhadrā.

42-43. Instructed by her mother-in-law Kuntī, Draupadī duly worshipped the queens of Kṛṣṇa such as Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā, Bhadrā, Jāmbavatī, Kālindī, Mitravindā. Śaibyā, and the pious Nāgnajitī and other women-guests, with garments, wreaths of flowers, ornaments, etc.

44. King Dharmarāja made comfortable arrangement of lodging for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and that of his queens, members of the army, followers and counsellors providing everyday with new objects of enjoyment.

45. Accompanied with Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa propitiated the Fire-god, offering him the Khāṇḍava forest for consumption. He rescued Maya (from the fire) who constructed a heavenly assembly-hall for king Yudhiṣṭhira.

46. With the desire of pleasing king Yudhiṣṭhira, Kṛṣṇa stayed many months at Indraprastha. Occasionally, surrounded by warriors, he rode out in a chariot with Arjuna for excursion and sport.

## CHAPTER SEVENTYTWO

*Jarāsandha slain*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1-2. (When Kṛṣṇa had spent a restful period for some days) on a certain occasion, king Yudhiṣṭhira was seated in his court-hall attended by sages, Brāhmaṇas, Kṣattriyas, Vaiśyas and his brothers, preceptors, elders of the family, clansmen and relatives. He addressed Kṛṣṇa within the hearing of them all.

*Yudhiṣṭhira said* :

3. O Lord Govinda ! I intend to adore you and your hallowed part-manifestations (in the form of Indra and other deities) by performing the noblest of sacrifice called the Rājasūya. May you be pleased (to help us) to accomplish this.

4. O lotus-navelled Lord ? Your feet destroy everything inauspicious. Those pious people who constantly worship them physically, contemplate on them mentally, and sing of them vocally attain emancipation from *saṁsāra*. They obtain even worldly blessings if they so desire but not others.

5. O God of gods ! Let the world, therefore, witness the supreme efficacy of the service of your lotus-like feet. O Lord ! Be pleased to demonstrate to the Kaurava and Sṛñjaya chiefs, the status reached and fruits reaped by those who worship you and by those who do not do so.

6. O Lord ! You are Brahman himself, the Inner Soul abiding in all beings. You eternally enjoy your essential state of blissfulness and look upon all as equal. Hence the notion of difference such as 'this is mine' and 'this is not mine' cannot

be predicated of you. Like persons betaking to the celestial wish-yielding tree, your grace is conferred on those who serve you and it is commensurate to the measure (and intensity) of their service, and there is no violation of this law.

*The Lord replied* :

7. O King ! This resolution of yours is excellent. O destroyer of enemies ? By performance of the Rājasūya sacrifice your auspicious fame (as the conqueror of all kings) will pervade the three worlds.

8. The performance of this sovereign sacrifice is desirable not only on behalf of us, your friends and well wishers, but also on behalf of sages, your ancestors, gods and all created beings.

9. Having defeated all the kings in the world and thus brought under control the whole of the earth, collect all the necessary articles of sacrifice and then commence the performance of this great sacrifice.

10. O King ! These brothers of yours are born from the rays of the deities (such as Indra, Vāyu) who are the guardians of the worlds. And I, who am never won over by persons lacking self-control, have been conquered by you, by your control of mind and senses.

11. In this world, not even a celestial being can discomfit my devotee by his energy, glory, affluence or supernatural power, much less can an earthly being do so.

*Śri Śuka said* :

12. Having heard the approbatory speech of the Lord, king Yudhiṣṭhira became extremely delighted and his countenance looked cheerful like a fresh-blown lotus. He assigned the conquest of cardinal points (of the world) to his brothers who were imbued with the lustre and energy of god Viṣṇu.

13. He commanded Sahadeva to conquer the South along with Sṛñjayas and deputed Nakula to the West, and Arjuna to the North and Bhīma, in alliance with Matsyas, Kekayas and Madrakas to the East.

14. Conquering the kings with their might and energy, those warriors brought from those quarters immense wealth to king Yudhiṣṭhira who was preparing for sacrifice.

15. Hearing that Jarāsandha could not be conquered, Yudhiṣṭhira became anxious. They say that to Yudhiṣṭhira who was pondering (over the subjugation of Jarāsandha), Kṛṣṇa, the Primary Cause of the world, suggested the expedient suggested by Uddhava.

16. O Parīkṣit ? Thereupon, the three (warriors)—Bhīmasena, Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa — disguised themselves as Brāhmaṇas and went to Girivraja (the capital of Magadha) where stayed Jarāsandha, the son of Bṛhadratha.

17. Those three Kṣattriyas disguised as Brāhmaṇas, went to Jarāsandha's palace at the time of receiving unexpected guests (with no previous appointment). They begged of king Jarāsandha who was friendly and devoted to Brāhmaṇas and was a keen observer of the sacred duties of the householder.

18. O king ! Please know us as unexpected guests who have come over a long distance for soliciting a request. May god betide you ! Be, therefore, pleased to grant our request.

19. Is there anything unbearable to people with fortitude and endurance? What act is there which the unrighteous would hesitate to do ? What is there that the generous cannot give away ? What person is a stranger or an enemy to those who look upon all as equals.

20. Whoever, endowed with capability to do so, does not, by means of this perishable body, achieve everlasting glory worthy of being sung by the righteous, is worthy of being pitied and censured.

21. Kings Hariścandra, Rantideva, Śibi, Bali, Mudgala (who lived on grains gleaned from fields), the legendary pigeon (who sacrificed its life for the hunter and the hunter (who emulated the pigeon's example) and many others attained to everlasting fame at the cost of this transient body.

*Śri Śuka said :*

22. From their tones, appearance, the scars on the forearms caused by the friction of bow-strings, Jarāsandha came to know that they belonged to the Kṣattriya class. He also

felt that he had seen them formerly somewhere. He began to think :

23. "These are certainly Kṣattriyas who have adopted the guise of Brāhmaṇas. I shall give whatever they beg of me even if it be my body which is difficult to part with.

24. The glorious fame of king Bali is heard glorified far and wide in all directions even though he was dislodged from his sovereign position by Viṣṇu in the disguise of a Brāhmaṇa.

25. The great king of Daityas, knowing full well that it was Viṣṇu in the form of a Brāhmaṇa and though prevented by his preceptor Śukra, he gave away the earth to Viṣṇu in the guise of a Brāhmaṇa who intended to deprive Bali of his sovereignty and splendour for the sake of Indra.

26. What is the good of this life of that wretched Kṣattriya who does not aspire to attain vast renown at the cost of this perishable, ever-waning body for the good of Brāhmaṇas."

27. Reflecting thus, the noble-minded king Jarāsandha spoke out to Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna and Bhīma, "O Brāhmaṇas. Choose whatever you desire to have. I shall give even my head to you."

*Lord Kṛṣṇa replied* :

28. "O great king. We are Kṣattriyas who have come here to seek a fight. We do not beg for food. We want a fight with you, in a single combat if it pleases you.

29. This is Vṛkodara (Bhīma) the son of Kuntī. This is his brother Arjuna. Please know me as Kṛṣṇa, their maternal cousin and your sworn enemy."

30. Thus informed by Kṛṣṇa, the king of Magadhas laughed loudly. Getting enraged, he declared, "you dull-witted fellows, (if you so seek it) I shall give a battle with you.

31. I shall not fight with a coward like you who get confounded in battles. Out of my fear, you abandoned your capital Mathurā and sought shelter in the sea.

32. This Arjuna is neither equal in age nor surpassing me in strength. And hence he is no match for me as a combatant. Bhīma is my equal in strength."

33. With these words, he handed over a huge mace to Bhīmasena and taking another tremendous mace for himself he went out of the town.

34. There on a level ground as the arena, the two warriors closed in fight against each other, both of them, being proud and furious in battle, hit each other with their maces hard like (Indra's) thunderbolt.

35. While they were making skilful wheeling manoeuvres to the right or to the left, the combat became spectacular like the one of actors on the stage.

36. O king! When the maces hurled at each other clashed each other, there arose a harsh and cracking sound *caṭ caṭ* resembling the clapping of Vajras (Indra's thunderbolt) or like the clashing of the tusks of two fighting tuskers.

37. Just as two twigs of the sun plant are reduced to pulp when two elephants, furious with rage, fight with each other with those twigs, those two maces hurled with full force of their arms dashed against each other and came in contact with each other's shoulders, hips, feet, hands, thighs and collar-bones and were reduced to powder.

38. When their maces were broken down in this way, those furious warriors among men pounded each other, boxing with fists as hard as iron. The noise produced by the blows of their palms as they struck each other was like that of two tuskers dashing against each other and was harsh like the striking of Vajra (or clapping of thunder).

39. Both Bhīma and Jarāsandha were equal to each other in training, strength and energy. They struck each other with unabated force. The combat however remained undecided.

40. In this way twentyseven days passed while they fought by day but behaved like friends at night (when the combat was over).

41. O king Parīkṣit! On one day Bhīmasena confessed to Kṛṣṇa, his maternal uncle's son, "O Mādhava (Descendant of Madhu), I am unable to vanquish Jarāsandha in the duel.

42. Śrī Kṛṣṇa knew the secret of the birth and death of the enemy and how the demoness Jarā conferred life on

Jarāsandha. He strengthened Bhīma by transferring his energy and began to consider.

43. He hit upon a plan of killing the enemy. Kṛṣṇa of infallible insight showed it to Bhīma symbolically by splitting a twig.

44. Bhīma, a prominent warrior of enormous strength understood the suggestion conveyed to him. He took hold of Jarāsandha by both his feet and felled him on the ground.

45. He pressed down one foot of the enemy with one of his feet and with his both hands he caught hold of the other foot and tore him in two from the anus, like an elephant splitting a branch of a tree.

46. Now people beheld the two separate parts of the body each with one foot, one thigh, one testicle, one hip, half the back, one breast, one shoulder, one arm, one eye, one eyebrow and one ear.

47. There was a great outcry, when the king of Magadhas was slain. Clasping Bhīma in their arms, Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa applauded him.

48. The glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa is the creator and protector of all beings. None could fathom his greatness and power. He installed Jarāsandha's son Sahadeva as the king of Magadhas on the throne and set at liberty kings kept in confinement by Jarāsandha, the king of Magadhas.

## CHAPTER SEVENTYTHREE

*Return of Kṛṣṇa and others to Indraprastha*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. Twenty thousand eight hundred kings who were easily defeated in battle (by Jarāsandha) were kept confined in a valley surrounded on all sides by the mountain. (Released from captivity) they came out with unclean bodies and dirty clothes.

2. Emaciated with hunger and with mouths parched up and greatly reduced in bodies due to confinement for a long time, the kings saw Lord Kṛṣṇa of dark blue complexion like a cloud, wearing yellow silken garments.

3. He was bearing the mark of Śrīvatsa; had four arms. His eyes were reddish like the inner part of a lotus-flower and he was charming and gracious in appearance. He was adorned with brilliant alligator-shaped ear-rings.

4. He was holding a lotus in one of his hands and was wielding a mace, a conch and a discus (Sudarśana) in the remaining three arms. He was adorned with a crown, a necklace of pearls, bracelets, a zone and a pair of armlets.

5. His neck was shining with the excellent jewel Kaustubha and had a garland of forest-flowers (*Vanamālā*) hanging on his bosom. The kings appeared to drink him with eyes and to lick him with tongues.

6. They were as if smelling him with their noses and embracing him with their arms. They bowed to the Lord with their heads touching his feet and rid themselves of all sins.

7. At the sight of Śrī Kṛṣṇa they were so much overjoyed that they got over the languor and exhaustion caused by their incarceration. Folding their palms, the kings eulogized Hṛṣīkeśa (Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of all senses) in the following words :

*The kings submitted their prayer* :

8. We bow to you, O God of Gods. You remove the distress of those that seek shelter in you, O Immutable Lord, Being disgusted with the terrible *saṁsāra* we have resorted to you. Pray, be pleased to protect us, O Kṛṣṇa.

9. O Lord ! Slayer of the demon Madhu ! We do not blame that Jarāsandha, king of Magadhas. It is really your Grace that we kings were deprived of our kingdoms, O Almighty Lord.

10. A king elated with pride of sovereignty and affluence does not attain the Final Beatitude, but being infatuated by your deluding potency (Māyā) looks upon the transient worldy fortune as permanent.

11. Just as children (or foolish people) mistake a mirage as a pool of water, persons without discriminatory power, ascribe reality to the everchanging Māyā which brings about modifications.

12. O Lord ! Formerly we were blinded by our pride of kingship and affluence. In our ambition to conquer this earth, we competed with each other slaughtering mercilessly our own subjects. We were so madly proud that we did not think of death or of yourself, who were ahead of us.

13. O Kṛṣṇa ! By your form called Time, of inexorable velocity and infinite prowess, we were despoiled of our former affluence and sovereignty. It is through your Grace that today we, with our pride completely destroyed, are contemplating on your feet.

14. We do not aspire after this mirage like sovereignty which is to be enjoyed by this ever-decaying body, a nursery of ailments). Nor do we seek to enjoy after death the fruits of our (religious or meritorious) actions (in heaven) which sound so pleasant to the ears, O Almighty Lord.

15. Pray, be gracious to teach us, that expedient whereby we shall never lose the memory of your lotus-like feet (and continue to contemplate on them) even while we are involved in the series of births and deaths.

16. We repeatedly pay our salutations to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva, the destroyer of the misery of *saṁsāra* (even of Daityas), the Supreme Self. You are the remover of sufferings of those who bow to you, O Govinda (Lord of Senses).

*Śri Śuka said* :

17. O dear Parīkṣit ! Thus eulogised by the kings who were now freed from captivity, the merciful Lord who affords protection to those who seek it, spoke to them in sweet language as follows :

*The Lord said* :

18. O monarchs ! As desired by you, from now onwards your unflinching devotion unto me who am the Ruler of the

universe and the Self, abiding in all, shall grow strong and deep-rooted.

19. How glad I am at your correct resolution, O kings. What you expressed is the truth. For I have seen how growing pride of affluence and authority has a maddening effect on people.

20. Haihaya (Sahasrārjuna), Nahuṣa, Veṅa, Rāvaṇa, Naraka and other rulers of gods, demons and human beings have fallen down from their positions, in consequence of their arrogance, begotten of their prosperity and power.

21. Being thoroughly cognisant of the fact that everything that is created like the body (and other things connected therewith) is perishable, you worship me by performing sacrifices and be alert and protect your subjects in a righteous manner, O monarchs.

22. You secure the continuity of your family by begetting children. Bear up with equable mind, the weal and woe, prosperity and adversity, birth or death as it comes to your lot and carry on your life devoting your heart to me.

23. Remain indifferent to your body and things connected with it. Take delight in the spiritual bliss of the self and observe vows of self-discipline. Thus, concentrating your mind properly and steadily in me, you will ultimately attain to me who am the supreme Brahman.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

24. Having enjoined the kings in the above manner, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Ruler of the Universe ordered male and female servants to give them a bath.

25. He made Sahadeva (now the king of Magadha) to receive them respectfully, by giving them clothes, ornaments, wreaths of flowers and pigments worthy of kings.

26. When the kings had taken an excellent bath and put on their rich clothes and ornaments, they were served with dainty dishes and were offered various luxuries worthy of kings such as betel-leaves, etc.

27. Having been honoured by Mukunda, these kings, wearing brilliant ear-rings and freed from their distressful

conditions, looked resplendent like planets at the end of the rainy season.

28. Mounting them in chariots decorated with gold and jewels and drawn by good horses, and cheering up their hearts with sweet yet sincere words, they were sent to their respective countries.

29. The kings who were thus relieved of their hardships by the highly noblesouled Kṛṣṇa, returned contemplating on Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the universe and his noble deeds.

30. (Arriving at their capitals) they told to their ministers (and subjects) the glorious deeds of that Supreme Person and carried on their life (and government) deligently as per instructions of the Lord.

31. Having slain Jarāsandha through the instrumentation of Bhīma, Keśava was worshipped by Sahadeva and accompanied with the two sons of Kuntī (Bhīma and Arjuna), he left for Indraprastha.

32. Having reached Khāṇḍavaprastha, these three warriors who had vanquished their enemies blew their conchs, thrillings their friends with delight and their foes with terror.

33. Hearing that sound, the citizens of Indraprastha became delighted in their minds. They concluded that Jarāsandha had been killed and king Yudhiṣṭhira also felt that he had accomplished his object.

34. Having bowed down to king Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Janārdana and Arjuna reported to him in details all they had severally done.

35. Having heard how compassion had been shown by Kṛṣṇa, Dharmarāja shed tears of joy and was too much overwhelmed with love to express a word.

## CHAPTER SEVENTYFOUR

*Yudhiṣṭhira's Rājasūya : Śiśupāla slain*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. Having thus heard about the slaying of Jarāsandha and also about Lord Kṛṣṇa's supreme glory, king Yudhiṣṭhira was highly delighted. He addressed him as follows.

*Yudhiṣṭhira said* :

2. All the preceptors of the three worlds (like Sanaka and others) and all the great gods, the protectors of different worlds, do bear on their heads your commands when they have the privilege to receive that Grace which is rarely obtained by others.

3. O Lord of infinite prowess and glory ! That lotus-eyed personage like you bears and carries out commands of factually indigent persons who regard themselves conceitedly as rulers, is itself an extreme mockery unbecoming of you as below dignity.

4. But you are the Supreme Brahman like unto the effulgence of the Sun, the glory of the Brahman, the Supreme Self who is one, without a second is neither enhanced nor diminished by the performance of acts by you.

5. O unconquerable Lord of Lakṣmī ! Just as the beasts (or ignorant people) entertain the (perverse) notion of difference pertaining to their body indexed by such terms as "I and mine", "You and yours", even your devotees do not possess such a crooked notion of difference (Need it be said that it is totally absent in you ?)

*Śrī Śuka said* :

6. Addressing Kṛṣṇa thus and with his approval, Kuntī's son, Yudhiṣṭhira invited competent and worthy Brāhmaṇas who were proficient in the Vedas and the sacrificial ritual, to officiate as priests (at the Rājasūya sacrifice to be performed) in a period suitable for the celebration of such sacrifices such as the spring.

7-9. ( Kṛṣṇa- ) Dvaipāyana ( Vyāsa ), Bharadvāja, Sumantu, Gautama, Asita, Vasiṣṭha, Cyavana, Kaṇva, Maitreya, Kavaṣa, Trita, Viśvāmitra, Vāmadeva, Sumati, Jaimini, Kratu, Paila. Parāśara, Garga, Vaiśampāyana, Atharvan, Kāśyapa, Dhaumya, Paraśurāma (of the Bhṛgu clan), Āsuri, Vītihotra, Madhucchandas, Vīrasena, Akṛtavraṇa—these and many others were invited.

10. (And also were invited) Droṇa, Bhīṣma, Kṛpa and others, Dhṛtarāṣṭra with all his sons and the noble-minded Vidura.

11. Brāhmaṇas, Kṣattriyas, Vaiśyas, Śūdras whoever was desirous of seeing the sacrifice, and all kings and their ministers (and subjects) assembled there, O King.

12. Thereupon the Brāhmaṇas ploughed the sacrificial ground (where gods are to be worshipped with oblations) with gold ploughs and following the scriptural injunctions, they consecrated the king as the sacrificer.

13-15. As the tradition goes, all the utensils used in this sacrifice were of gold as they were at Varuṇa's Rājasūya sacrifice in ancient times. Indra and other protecting deities of different spheres, god Brahmā and Śiva along with their attendants, Siddhas and Gandharvas (celestial singers), Vidyādharas and big serpents, sages, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, birds, Kinnaras, Cāraṇas, kings along with their queens—all of them were invited and they attended the Rājasūya sacrifice of Pāṇḍu's son, Yudhiṣṭhira.

16. They were not surprised at all, as they thought that such a performance is quite natural to the devotees of Kṛṣṇa (to whom nothing is impossible). The sacrificial priests who looked brilliant like gods, conducted for the king, the Rājasūya sacrifice according to *śāstric* injunctions, as the gods did for the sake of Varuṇa.

17. On the day fixed for extraction of the Soma juice, the king with serene mind duly worshipped the highly respectable Brāhmaṇas conducting the sacrifice as well as the judges of the sacrificial performance.

18. The members of the assembly could not arrive at a unanimous decision as to who should be regarded as worthy

of receiving the first honour of worship as there were many deserving claimants. At this juncture, Sahadeva spoke out.

19. "(It is my considered opinion that) the imperishable Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Lord and protector of Sātvatas deserves this highest honour. For he is not only all deities but also Time, space, wealth and other things.

20. This universe is his manifestation. He constitutes the sacrifices. The sacrificial fire, oblations offered in the fire, the *mantras* recited at that time and the paths of knowledge and Yoga or devotion are meant for him.

21. He is One without a second; the universe is his manifestation O members of the assembly. Entirely dependent on himself and though himself unborn, he creates, protects and dissolves this universe.

22. It is through his Grace that people perform different actions, penances and *yogic* practices and everyone tries to achieve their high objects in life such as *dharma* (religious practices), *artha* (wealth), *kāma* (worldly enjoyment) and *mokṣa* (Final emancipation).

23. Therefore, this highest honour ought to be offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa who is the greatest of the great. It is thus by offering him the honour of the first worship in the assembly that we shall be honouring all created beings as well as ourselves.

24. He who desires to reap infinite merit in return for his gift should offer it to Lord Kṛṣṇa who constitutes the Soul of all created beings and looks upon all as his own self, (or attached to his devotees) quite serene (desireless) and absolutely perfect."

25. Sahadeva, who knew the supreme greatness of Kṛṣṇa addressed them in this way and observed silence. Hearing that all excellent and pious members of the assembly were satisfied and approved of the speech with the words "well said, well expressed",

26. Hearing the decision of the Brāhmaṇas and ascertaining the consensus (lit. what was desired in the hearts) of the members of the sacrificial assembly, king Yudhiṣṭhira was highly pleased. Overwhelmed with affection, he worshipped

Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of senses (as the foremost member of that assembly).

27. Then having washed the feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he (Yudhiṣṭhira) along with his queens, younger brothers, counsellors and members of his family, delightfully bore on their heads (drops of) that water (with which he washed the Lord's feet) which was capable of purifying the world.

28. He worshipped him by offering yellow silken cloths, and very valuable ornaments. But he could not see him clearly as his eyes were flowing with tears (of affection and joy).

29. Seeing Kṛṣṇa so worshipped, all people (in the assembly) folded their palms and offered him salutations with the words *Namaḥ* (Bow to you), *Jaya* (Victory to you). And showers of flowers fell down (from the sky).

30. Hearing this (above-mentioned) shouts of salutation and victory, Śiśupāla, the son of Damaghoṣa, whose anger was provoked by the glorification of Kṛṣṇa's excellences, rose from his seat. He raised up his arm. Being enraged he fearlessly uttered harsh words (with reference to and) for the hearing of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

31. "The Vedic text that the Time-spirit is the real controller (capable of bringing about undesirable events) and that it is inviolable, is quite true. (For example, here, in this assembly) even the judgment of the elderly people has become vitiated by the prattling of an ignorant junior (like Sahadeva).

32. O leaders of the assembly ! You are the best judges of deciding who should be the proper recepient (of this highest honour). Please do not head the childish talk of that ignorant boy Sahadeva believing in which you consented that Kṛṣṇa deserved this honour.

33-34.* To the utter disregard of the leaders of this assembly who are endowed with austers penance, learning,

*. ŚR. takes pains to show that the inner meaning of these verses conveys the glorification of Lord Kṛṣṇa as Śiśupāla was his attendant in his original birth and as such he would naturally praise the Lord. It appears that members of the assembly shut their ears, thinking it to be defa-

observance of sacred vows,—members who have cleared all their sins by their spiritual knowledge; the great sages who are established in Brahman and who are worshipped even by the guardian deities of different spheres, how is a cowherd, a disgrace to his clan and family, considered eligible to receive this honour ? How can a crow deserve to receive Puroḍāśa (a sacrificial oblation) ?

35. He does not belong to any class of society, (*varṇa*), stage of life (*āśrama*) or nobility of birth. He has been excommunicated by (i.e. beyond the pale of) all *dharmas*. He behaves wantonly (against moral or religious code of conduct) and is devoid of virtues. How does he deserve worship ?

36. His family has been cursed by Yayāti (the founder of his clan) and is excommunicated by all good people. He is always indulged in drinking. How is he eligible for this worship ?

37. These marauders have given up their country (Śūrasena i.e. region around Mathurā)—a land frequented and inhabited by Brāhmaṇa sages; they have resorted to their citadel in the sea—a place destitute of Brāhmaṇas devoted to Vedic studies and harass all people from that strong-hold."

38. Śiśupāla whose fund of auspicious acts and merits was exhausted, spoke these and the like defamatory words to Kṛṣṇa. But the Lord did not respond at all as a lion does to the howling of female jackals.

39. Hearing that unbearable censuring of the Lord, the members of the assembly closed their ears and left the assembly, censuring Śiśupāla angrily.

40. He who does not leave the place even after hearing reproachful words about the Lord or about his devotees, becomes deprived of his merits and goes down to hell.

mation of the Lord; the clans of Matsya, Kekaya, Sṛñjayas did not understand this double meaning and wanted to attack Śiśupāla. And Lord Kṛṣṇa also did not understand his praise and beheaded his servant who was praising him in words of double meaning and marched against him with a sword (vide verses 38-43 below). In *supra* 3.18-3-8 where Hiraṇyākṣa upbraided Lord Viṣṇu in the boar form, ŚR. has tried to read Viṣṇu's praise in it, vide vol. I pp. 320-321.

41. Then sprang to their feet the indignant Pāṇḍavas, Matsyas, Kekayas and Sṛñjayas with their arms uplifted with the desire of finishing with Śiśupāla.

42. Undaunted by them, Śiśupāla took up his sword and shield and reproached the kings who sided with Kṛṣṇa in that assembly.

43. When matters came to such a stage the Lord himself stood up in the meanwhile and restraining his own partisans, angrily cut off the head of his advancing enemy with his sharp-edged discus—Sudarśana.

44. There was a great uproar when Śiśupāla was killed. In that bustle, the kings who were his followers ran away to save their lives.

45. Thereafter, like a meteor falling on the earth from the sky, there emerged an effulgent light from the body of Śiśupāla and entered the person of Vāsudeva while all beings stood as witness to it.

46. Pondering over the Lord with thoughts saturated with hatred and anger entertained for three consecutive lives, he (Śiśupāla) attained identity with the Lord, for it is one's own brooding which determines one's future state of life.

47. The emperor Yudhiṣṭhira gave liberal sacrificial fees to the priests who conducted the sacrifice and to the members of the sacrificial assembly. And having thus worshipped them all with due respect, he performed the closing ablution of the sacrifice (*avabhṛtha snāna*) according to the injunctions laid down in the *śāstras*.

48. After having accomplished the Rājasūya sacrifice successfully for king Yudhiṣṭhira, Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the masters of Yoga, lived some more months at Indraprastha at the request of his friends.

49. Thereafter, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, took leave of king Yudhiṣṭhira who was unwilling to let him go and returned to his capital along with his queens and counsellors.

50. The long narrative of how (Jaya and Vijaya) the two residents of Vaikuṇṭha (as the attendants of Lord Viṣṇu) had to undergo repeated births on the earth under the

curse of Brāhmaṇas (like Sanaka, etc.), has been described to you in details.[1]

51. When king Yudhiṣṭhira performed his closing ablution of the Rājasūya sacrifice he shone like Indra, the king of gods, in the assembly of Brāhmaṇas and Kṣattriyas.

52. All the gods, men and celestial beings (who attended the sacrifice) were duly honoured by the king. They went back to their respective place praising with joy Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Rājasūya sacrifice.

53. The sinful Duryodhana, the veritable Kali himself, who was a bane to the family of Kurus was the only exception. He could not bear the sight of the vast affluence and the royal splendour of Pāṇḍu's son (Yudhiṣṭhira).

54. He who sings of Lord Viṣṇu's glorious deed of slaying Śiśupāla (and Jarāsandha and others) and the release of the kings taken captive (by Jarāsandha) and the performance of the Rājasūya sacrifice is released from the bondage of all sins.

## CHAPTER SEVENTYFIVE

*Discomfiture of Duryodhana*

*King Parīkṣit enquired* :

1-2. We have heard that all men, gods, kings and celestial beings who had assembled there for the Rājasūya sacrifice of king Ajātaśatru (Yudhiṣṭhira) were filled with joy to see its glorious accomplishment, O Brāhmaṇa sage. And Duryodhana was the only exception. Be pleased to explain to us. O worshipful sir, the reason of this.

*The sage Śuka replied* :

3. In the Rājasūya sacrifice of your illustrious grandfather, all his relatives attached to him with bonds of affection, accepted the responsibility of various departments and rendered him service (during the sacrifice).

1. *vide supra* Skandha VII. Ch.s 1-9.

4. Bhīma was the head of the culinary department, Duryodhana was in charge of treasury. Sahadeva was engaged in the reception department while Nakula was entrusted with the provision of supplies (of things required).

5. Arjuna was appointed to serve the elders and preceptors, while Kṛṣṇa was engaged in washing the feet (of the guests). Draupadī superintended service and catering of food while the noble-minded Karṇa was entrusted with conferring gifts.

6-7. Yuyudhāna, Vikarṇa, Hārdikya, Vidura and others as well as Bhūri and other sons of Bāhlika, Santardana and others were entrusted with different departments and duties in that great sacrifice. And all of them endeavoured to carry out their duties, as liked by King Yudhiṣṭhira, O great King.

8. When the priests, member of the assembly, persons of wide and deep erudition, intimate friends and relatives were properly honoured with sweet words, costly presents and sacrificial (and other religious) fees and when (the soul of) Śiśupāla entered the feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Pāṇḍavas took the closing ablution of the Rājasūya sacrifice in the heavenly river, Gaṅgā.

9. During the celebration of the ceremony of the *avabhrtha* bath, various instruments of music such as tabors, conchs, *paṇavas*, drums, kettle-drums and horns were sounded.

10. Dancing girls danced merrily. Bands after bands of songster engaged in vocal music. And sound of musical instruments like lutes, flutes and clapping reached the heaven.

11. With their flags and streamers of variegated colours (fluttering in the air) and accompanied with battalions of well-adorned soldiers, big elephants, chariots and horses, kings wearing wreaths of gold started (for the *avabhṛtha* bath).

12. With the sacrificer (Yudhiṣṭhira) in front of them followed the clans of Yādavas, Sṛñjayas, Kāmbojas, Kauravas, Kekayas and Kosalas shaking the earth with their armies.

13. The members of the sacrificial assembly, the priests and prominent Brāhmaṇas chanting the Vedas loudly followed him. And the gods, sages, manes (ancestors) and celestial singers (Gandharvas) sang the praise of Yudhiṣṭhira and showered flowers (on the procession).

14. Men and women who have adorned themselves richly with clothes, ornaments, garlands and perfumes sported smearing and sprinkling each other with oil and saffron-mixed water.

15. The courtesans sported being smeared by men and reciprocally smearing men with oil, milk, perfumed water, turmeric powder and thick saffron paste.

16. With a desire to witness this procession and festival ladies of royal families all well-escorted by guards went out in their vehicles (palanquins, chariots etc.) just as heavenly damsels crowded the sky in their excellent heavenly cars (to have a look at it). Those ladies when besprinkled by the friends of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (their maternal cousin) appeared still more beautiful with their faces blooming with bashful smiles.

17. With their syringes, the ladies of royal families sprinkled jets of coloured water on their brothers-in-law and friends. Their garments being moist, the limbs of their persons such as breasts, thighs, and hips were exposed to the view. In the excitement of watersport, the braids of their hair got loosened and flowers dropped down from them. By their attractive sportive activities, they provoked impious thoughts in impure-minded people.

18. The emperor ascended the chariot drawn by excellent horses and decorated with wreaths of gold. Accompanied by his consorts he looked resplendent like the sovereign sacrifice Rājasūya with the attendant ritualistic processes incarnate.

19. After performing the special sacrifice called *Patnisaṁyāja* and other rituals connected with the concluding bath (*avabhṛtha*), king Yudhiṣṭhira performed *ācamana* (sipped water thrice from his right palm) and as directed by the priest, he along with Draupadī took bath in the Gaṅgā.

20. Drums from the heaven as well as those from the earth were simultaneously sounded. Gods, sages, manes and human beings showered flowers on them.

21. Thereupon, persons belonging to all classes of society (*varṇas*) and stages of life (*āśrama*) took their bath there; for even persons who perpetrated the most heinous sins are absolved of them by such a bath.

22. Then King Yudhiṣṭhira put on two new silk cloths

and was well-adorned with ornaments. He then worshipped the sacrificial priests, the members of the (sacrificial) assembly, Brāhmaṇas and others by honouring them with clothes and ornaments

23. The king who was unflinchingly devoted to Nārāyaṇa duly honoured his friends, kinsmen, kings, friends, well-wishers and all others (who were present) in all respects.

24. Being adorned with jewelled ear-rings, wreaths of flowers, turbans, long coats, silk cloth and extremely costly necklaces, all men looked splendid like gods, while women, the beauty of whose countenance was enhanced by a pair of ear-rings and (overhanging) locks of hair, appeared charming with girdles of gold (round their waist).

25-26. Thereupon highly virtuous priests (*ṛtvijs*), members of that assembly, the reciters of the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, Kṣattriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras as well as the princes who assembled to attend the sacrifice; as also gods, sages, manes and other beings, the guardians of the world along with their followers were duly honoured. They sought the permission to go and returned to their respective regions.

27. Even as a mortal being is not sated by drinking the nectar, people did not feel satiated by glorifying the splendid success of the Rājasūya sacrifice performed by that royal sage Yudhiṣṭhira who was but a humble servant of Lord Hari.

28. King Yudhiṣṭhira could not bear the idea of separation and affectionately importuned his friends, relatives, kith and kin and Lord Kṛṣṇa to stay longer.

29. Dear Parīkṣit ! The Lord despatched Sāmba and other Yādava warriors to Dvārakā. Being desirous of pleasing king Yudhiṣṭhira, the Lord continued to stay on with him.

30. In this way, with the help of Lord Kṛṣṇa, king Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Dharma, crossed over the ocean of his cherished ambition (of performing the Rājasūya sacrifice) which was very difficult to be accomplished. And he was thus thoroughly cured of his fever of anxiety for proper performance of the Rājasūya.

31. On a certain occasion, Duryodhana was sorely troubled at heart to notice the glorious splendour of king Yudhiṣṭhira's harem and the grandeur of the Rājasūya (and

the eminent position attained thereby) by Yudhiṣṭhira whose heart was devoted to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

32. In that harem, all the affluence and royal splendour of kings of men, demon kings and Lord of gods accumulated and utilised by Maya, the architect of that palace, were shining resplendently. With all these, Draupadī, the princess of king Drupada, waited upon her spouses. The heart of Duryodhana, king of Kauravas, was attached to her and hence he was tormented (with jealousy).

33. At that time, thousands of consorts of Lord Kṛṣṇa were staying in that palace. Owing to the heaviness of their buttocks, they had to walk slowly and the anklets on their feet jingled sweetly. They were slender-waisted, and their (white) pearl necklaces became reddish with saffron applied to their breasts. And their beautiful countenances appeared still more attractive with their rocking ear-rings and curly locks of hair.

34-35. Once, in a part of that assembly constructed by Maya, emperor Yudhiṣṭhira, surrounded by his younger brothers and relatives and by Kṛṣṇa who was his eye (indicating what is in his interest or otherwise), was seated on a throne of gold like Indra, the Lord of gods himself. He was endowed with imperial glory and was glorified by bards.

*VJ.'s Text adds* :

35A. He was waited upon by prominent Brāhmaṇas coming from different parts of the country. Fanned with many white coloured *chowries,* the tiger among the kings (emperor Yudhiṣṭhira) shone like the Lord of gods in the heaven.

36. There entered the swaggering proud Duryodhana adorned with a crown and garlands with a sword in his hand. He was surrounded by his brothers and he was angrily railing at the guards at the door and others.

37. He was so much deluded by the skill of Maya that when there was a part of the floor, he mistook it for a sheet of water and drew up his clothes and fell on the floor and at places tumbled into water mistaking it (the sheet of water) as floor.

*Vj's Text adds*:

37A. He regarded the floor paved with sapphires as a pond of water and took up his clothes and all people laughed at him.

37B. When king Duryodhana was proceeding to a pond of water, he thought it to be crystal pavement and fell into that pond.

38. O dear Parīkṣit. Seeing that Bhīma laughed at him; so too laughed the ladies and other kings even though king Yudhiṣṭhira tried to check them. Kṛṣṇa approved of them.

39. Duryodhana felt abashed and he hung down his head. As if burning with rage, he silently left for Hastināpura. There was a great uproar (of dismay and regrets) among the pious members of the assembly. The foe-less king Yudhiṣṭhira was dejected in mind. The Lord who was bent on reducing the burden of the earth, remained silent. It was through his deluding potency that Duryodhana was led into these mistakes.[1]

40. O king, I have narrated to you what you asked me how Duryodhana's wickedness developed during the great sacrifice of Rājasūya.

## CHAPTER SEVENTYSIX

*Fight with Śālva*

*Śri Śuka said* :

1. O King! Now listen to the account of another miraculous deed of Kṛṣṇa, who, out of sport, assumed a human form. This concerns the killing of Śālva, the master of the aerial car Saubha.

1. According to ŚR., this delusion of Duryodhana was the 'seed' of removing the burden of the earth and Bhima's laughter indicated Duryodhana's discomfiture. Hence, Kṛṣṇa kept quiet.

2. Śālva, a friend of Śiśupāla, had arrived (and was present) at the *Svayaṁvara* of Rukmiṇī. At that time (he), Jarāsandha and other partisans of Śiśupāla were vanquished by Yādavas.*

3. In the hearing of all the kings (present there) Śālva took a vow, "I shall eliminate all the Yādavas from this earth. Look at my bravery."

4. Having made this solemn declaration, the foolish king

* *Here VJ.' s Text adds the following verses.*

2.1 The Lord was desirous of lightening the burden of the earth. Contemplating over his self in himself, he remained silent. Thereupon the sage whose lotus-feet are adored by gods, revealed himself in the presence of the Lord of the world.

2.2. Nārada was welcomed by all the members of the assembly by going forward to receive and was duly worshipped by them. He was highly worshipped by Kṛṣṇa and he occupied a comfortable seat near the King.

2.3. With due formalities Dharmarāja bowed to him and enquired of him : "You have access every-where and you pay visits anywhere and at any time and are impartial (not attached to anyone), O Brāhmaṇa sage.

2.4-5. Who among all chivalrous kings ruling over many kingdoms in the world, is the warrior-prince that is engaged in war preparations all the while now ?". Hearing the question so posed by him, the sage Nārada replied.

*Nārada said* :

2.6. As the pride of all kings is crushed down by Kṛṣṇa of incomparable valour, they now live in their respective kingdoms with their activities curtailed and their glory lost.

2.7. There is, however, one Kṣattriya prince who is highly enterprising and is of wicked mind. He is born in the Śālva country and is a king with a powerful force of men and animals.

2.8. His brother Haṁsa, the son of Brahmadatta, was killed in the battle of the Yamunā by the high-souled Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa), the conquerer of the universe.

2.9. The enemy of Kṛṣṇa, with an ambition to repay the debt of his (dead) brother by avenging his death, went to Kuṇḍinapura and created an alliance with Rukmī and other princes for that purpose.

2.10. (The alliance was formed) with Śiśupāla, Druma and other kings, with Dantavakra as the prominent leader. But Jarāsandha and others were defeated in the battle.

1. V.l. entered the forest for performing Penance—VJ.

*VJ.'s Text adds here* :

4. A : When he departed and did not return for many years though his ministers waited for him, his younger brother was installed by them as the king, for they were in need of a monarch (to rule).

propitiated the Almighty god Śiva, subsisting himself only on a handful of dust (flour?) once a day.

5. At the end of the year, the glorious god Śiva, the consort of Pārvatī, who is easily propitiated in a short while, offered to bestow a boon on Śālva who had sought asylum with him.

6. As a boon, he prayed the god to grant him an aerial car which would go anywhere at his will and which should be impregnable to gods, Asuras, human beings, Gandharvas, serpents and Rākṣasas (demons) and which could strike terror in the heart of Vṛṣṇis.

7. "Be it so" said god Śiva, the Lord of mount Kailāsa. Commanded by Śiva. Maya, the conquerer of cities of enemies, constructed a city (like spacious aerial car) of steel, called Saubha and handed it over to Śālva.

8. Sālva obtained (in his possession) the aerial car that could move anywhere at his will and was shrouded in darkness and was inaccessible (to others).*

* *Here VJ's Text adds* :

8.1. He has now returned to his country which is militarily fully prepared with army and transport (horses, chariots, etc). Out of (all) princes, he is the only king actively preparing (for war), O king.

8.2. Having heard this report as detailed by Nārada, the affluent king Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Dharma, quietly looked at the face of the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa who was seated by his side.

8.3. Listening to that report, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the essence of courage and fortitude, was not disturbed at all. Laughing a bit loudly he remarked, "So be it", That is the index of his greatness.

8.4. Having worshipped the sage and paying him respects with sweet words. he thought, "It is a good thing that he who was wanted and expected for a long time, has also come now."

8.5-6. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Lakṣmī, immediately despatched Ugrasena, King of Yādavas, Yuyudhāna, Akrūra, Kṛtavarmā and other prominent Yādava warriors along with his contingent of army to defend Dvārakā (against the expected attack from Śālva.)

(End of the Eightyfourth chapter in VJ.'s Text)

*Śrī Śuka continued* :

8.7-8. While the noble-souled Govinda was thus staying at Indra-Prastha and king Yudhiṣṭhira along with his younger brothers had accomplished his purpose (the completion of the Rājasūya sacrifice), Śālva heard that his friend Śiśupāla, the son of Damaghoṣa and Jarāsandha had been killed and the Rājasūya had been completed and he got enraged.

9. Śālva laid siege to Dvārakā with a mighty army, O prominent Bharata. He razed to ground city parks, gardens, completely.

*VJ. adds* :

9.A He based his camp in the air over the city and fought.

10. He destroyed the city along with its towers, gates, mansions, balconies, terraces and places of recreation. Destructive weapons were showered from that formidable aerial car (a veritable floating city).

11. Heavily fell down (upon Dvārakā) huge stones, trees, thunderbolts, serpents, a shower of gravel (hail-stones ?). Terrific tornadoes swept (across the city) ; the cardinal points were darkened with heavy dust.

12. Just as the earth was (formerly) oppressed under the scourage of Tripura, the city of Kṛṣṇa was subjected to extreme harassment by Saubha and could not get any respite or comfort.

13. The glorious Pradyumna noticed how his people were subjected to distress. Encouraging them with words "Don't fear", the highly illustrious warrior mounted his chariot.

14-15. Sātyaki, Cārudeṣṇa, Sāmba, Akrūra and his younger brothers, Kṛtavarmā, Bhānuvinda, Gada, Śuka and Sāraṇa and other renowned leaders of the army followed him in their chariots equipped with bows and arms and accoutred in coats of mail and protected by chariots, elephants, cavalry and foot-soldiers.

16. Then there raged a battle between the army of Śālva and that of the Yādavas, tumultuous and horripulating like the (bitter) struggle between gods and Asuras (in ancient times).

17. Just as the sun (the hot-rayed luminary) dispells the darkness of the night instantaneously, Pradyumna, the son of Rukmiṇī destroyed in a moment all the black magical spells of Śālva, the master of Saubha, with his celestial missiles.

18. He pierced the commander-in-chief of Śālva's army with twenty shafts with gold feathers, iron tips and well-polished knots (known as *sannataparva*)

19. He struck Śālva with a hundred arrows and every

one of his soldiers with one shaft each, leaders of every battalion (or charioteers) with ten arrows and the horses with three each.

20. Observing that great and wonderful feat of the high-souled Pradyumna, soldiers on both the sides applauded him.

21. But the aerial-car Saubha constructed by Maya had such a magical structure and contrivances that sometimes it appeared many, sometimes one, and at times it was invisible. It was thus very difficult for the enemies (Yādavas) to locate it or conceive its nature and whereabouts.

22. Sometimes Saubha was on the ground; sometimes it flew into the sky; at times it rested on the summit of a mountain; sometimes it floated on water; sometimes it whirled round like a fire-brand and was not stationary at any point—(and thus was impossible to locate).

23. So the leaders of the Yādava army discharged arrows at every such point where Śālva with his aerial car Saubha and his soldiers made their appearance.

24. With his floating city Saubha and his army being sorely oppressed by the arrows discharged by the Yādava enemies — arrows the touch of which was scorching like the fire and the sun and unapproachable like venomous serpents Śālva fainted.

25. Though the Yādava warriors were severely beaten by the volleys of weapons discharged by the leaders of Śālva's army, none of them deserted the battlefield or his respective (appointed) position, for they wanted to win both the worlds (viz. their sovereignty in the world if survived or heavenly happiness if killed) in the battle.

26. A minister of Śālva called Dyuman, a mighty warrior himself but who was previously heavily beaten (by Pradyumna), made a surprise attack on Pradyumna and striking him with a heavy iron mace, roared loudly.

27. Pradyumna's charioteer, the son of Dāruka (Kṛṣṇa's charioteer) who knew his duty (as a charioteer), carried away from the battlefield Pradyumna, the chastiser of enemies whose chest was gravely wounded by the stroke of the mace.

28. When Pradyumna, the son of Kṛṣṇa regained his consciousness after some time he blamed his charioteer, "Alas !

you have not done well in that you have removed me from the battle-field.

29. No person born in Yadu's race is known to have turned away from the battle-field except me who incurred the blemish through a weak-minded charioteer like you.

30. Having deliberately and obviously left the battlefield, what should I plead to my uncle Balarāma and father Kṛṣṇa when they meet me and enquire about my ability.

31. My brothers and sisters-in-law will jeer at me and openly ask me, "How did you fare with your enemies in the battle? How is it that you played the coward?"

*The charioteer replied* :

32. (It is) With full knowledge of my duty as a charioteer that I have done this, O longlived one. My Lord, the prescribed duty is that the charioteer should protect the warrior in times of peril and the warrior should reciprocally protect him.

33. Knowing this duty as a charioteer, I took you away from the battlefield as, when attacked by the enemy and struck down with a mace, you became unconscions in a Swoon.

## CHAPTER SEVENTYSEVEN

*Slaying of King Śālva*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1*. Pradyumna sipped water (as *ācamana*), clad himself in armour, equipped himself with a bow and commanded his charioteer, "Please take me to the side of Dyumat".

2. While Dyumat was slaughtering his (Pradyumna's) forces, Pradyumna checked him and with a smile, he pierced him with eight arrows.

1* *VJ.'s Text adds* before verse 1.

1.A. Hearing the words spoken by the charioteer, Pradyumna, the delight of Yadus re-armed himself with weapons and told his charioteer on the battlefield.

3. With four shafts he struck the four horses (of his chariot); he hit the charioteer with one; with two he snapped his bow and flag (staff) and with another shaft he cut off his (Dyumat's) head.

4. Gada, Sātyaki, Sāmba and other Yādava heroes slaughtered the army of Śālva, the master of Saubha. All the inmates of the aerial car Saubha fell down into the sea with their necks lopped off (from the trunk of their bodies).

5. In this manner the armies of Yādavas and Śālva went on striking at each other. That terrific and tumultuous battle continued for twenty seven days and nights without break.

6. On being invited by Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Dharma, Kṛṣṇa who went to Indraprastha, stayed on there even after the completion of the Rājasūya sacrifice and slaying of Śiśupāla.

7.* He took his leave of the elders of the Kuru race, sages, Kuntī along with her sons. While he travelled to Dvārakā, he noticed very terrible portents.

4* *VJ reads*

4.A. Gada, Sātyaki, Akrūra, Sāmba, Śuka, Sāraṇa, Vasudeva and Ugrasena slaughtered the army of Śālva.

7* For verses 7-18 in ŚR.'s Text, VJ.'s Text reads the following verses (in *Vrindāvan edition*).

7.1. He noticed terrible evil omens prophesying war.

7.2. Taking leave of elders of the Kuru clan and sages and followed by Pāṇḍavas along with their ministers and accompanied by Brāhmaṇas, he set out from the city (Indraprastha).

7.3. After travelling for a short distance, he asked the citizens and the sons of Kuntī to stop. He bade goodbye to the sons of Kuntī who were bowing him down with tearful eyes.

7.4. He travelled in the westerly directions with his queens riding golden palanquins, accompanied with thousands of elephants, horses, chariots and foot-soldiers and followed by a battalion of princes.

7.5. Even Śālva who (i.e. whose force) was soundly battered retreated from the battlefield with his aerial car and returned to his own dominion.

7.6. While Śālva was going, Sāmba quickly pursued him and with his arrows he sent Śālva's minister Kṣemadhūrti to the abode of the god of death.

7.7. Pradyumna ambushed Śālva's most beloved general vininda while he was passing by the way and struck him with his arrows.

8. (On the way) he said to himself, "I have come here to Indraprastha accompanied by my elder brother Balarāma. The Kṣattriya princes, the allies of Śiśupāla must have surely attacked my city (Dvārakā), in our absence.*

9. After his arrival at Dvārakā he noticed the havoc wrought upon his subjects. He then entrusted the defence of the city to Balarāma. Perceiving the aerial car Saubha and the King of Śālvas, he commanded Dāruka.

10. "Quickly bring my chariot near Śālva, O charioteer. You need not be afraid (even though) this master of Saubha is skilled in the use of black magic in war-fare."

11. Dāruka, thus commanded by Kṛṣṇa, brought the chariot near Śālva. The friends and the enemy saw him enter the battle-field.

12. Śālva whose forces were practically wiped out, saw Kṛṣṇa enter the battle. At Kṛṣṇa's charioteer he darted a lance (that sped through the air) making a roaring sound.

7.8. Deeply pierced and wounded by Pradyumna, he took up a sword and shield and fought with Pradyumna, the son of Rukmiṇī. And it was a wonderful combat.

7.9. While he was making wonderful circular manouvers, the great Yādava warrior sundered his head off his body in that duel.

7.10. When its chief commanders were killed, the army lost its way and took to heels helter-skelter, with the main object of saving life.

7.11-13. The Eagle-bannered Lord Kṛṣṇa also hastily rushed to Dvārakā and found the mansions, balconies and towers in the city, in debris; the city gates, arches and ramparts broken down; main streets and quadrangles wiped out; parks and gardens devastated; and ponds and wells filled with stones; The recitation of Vedas and the sound 'Vaṣaṭ' (of priests offering oblations to fire) were silent. Kṛṣṇa was deeply troubled at heart and asked Kṛtavarmā how this devastation took place.

7.14. Hearing from Kṛtavarmā, the details how the King of Śālva wrought this ruin (of Dvārakā) Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Yādavas announced his vow while all the Sātvatas (Yādavas) were listening.

7.15. "Just now I chase Śālva and enter Dvārakā only after killing that wicked Śālva and drowning his aerial car Saubha into the sea."

7.16-17. Lord Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa), the god with the emblem of Garuḍa on his banner, mounted his excellent chariot to which were yoked (the four famous horses) Śaibya, Sugriva, Meghapuṣpa and Balāhaka; was equipped with various weapons and had Dāruka in front as the charioteer. He followed the track of Śālva with the speed of the mind and wind.

7.18. After crossing a long distance, He saw Śālva concealed under the waters of the sea but seated fully adorned in his aerial car Saubha.

* *VJ.'s Text adds* :

8-A. Pondering thus, the glorious Lord hastily arrived there coming to the battle-field, he saw Pradyumna and others.

13. Observing the lance rushing through the air with great speed and illumining all the quarters like a big meteor (or firebrand), Kṛṣṇa splintered it in hundred pieces with his arrows.

14. Hitting Śālva with sixteen shafts, he pierced the aerial car Saubha which was moving through the sky, with a volley of arrows just as the sun fills the space in the sky, with his rays.

15. Śālva wounded the left arm of Kṛṣṇa in which he wielded the Śārṅga bow. And the Śārṅga bow fell from Kṛṣṇa's hand. And it was indeed a miracle.

16. There was an outburst of wild outcry of consternation and wonder from all beings who witnessed it. The king of Saubha (i.e. Śālva) roared loudly and (boastfully) said to Kṛṣṇa:

17. "You stupid fellow ! You abducted the fiancee of our brother-like friend (Śiśupāla) in our very presence and killed our friend in the assembly at the time of Yudhiṣṭhira's Rājasūya while he was unaware.

18. In your pride you (falsely) regard yourself as invincible. Only if you stand before me (in this battle), I shall, with my sharp arrows, send you to a place (Yama's abode) whence nobody returns."

*The glorious Lord replied*:

19. "You are vainly bragging, O dull witted one ! You do not perceive the god of Death standing near you. Really valiant people do not indulge in idle prattling but exhibit their valour in fighting."

20. With these words Lord Kṛṣṇa, in extreme wrath, struck down Śālva on the collar-bone with his mace of terribly vehement force. (Under that blow) Śālva was thoroughly shaken and vomitted blood.

21. While the mace returned (to Kṛṣṇa) Śālva disappeared. Then within a short while a man approached him, bowed to him with his head and while sobbing told him, "I am sent by Devakī (with a message).

22. O Kṛṣṇa, of powerful arms. O Kṛṣṇa, so affectionate to parents ! Your father is captured and dragged away

by Śālva even as a butcher does to an animal to be slaughtered."

23. Hearing this unpleasant news, Kṛṣṇa exhibited His human nature. Deeply troubled at heart, despondent and overcome with filial affection, he exclaimed like an ordinary mortal.

24. "How is it possible that unperturbable Balarāma who is invincible to gods and Asuras (together) was defeated by this despicable Śālva and my father was taken away as a captive. (Ultimately) Providence is all powerful."

25. While Govinda was uttering these words, Śālva, the Lord of Saubha, made his appearance bringing with him someone resembling Vasudeva and threatened Kṛṣṇa :

26. "This is your own father who brought you forth in this world and for whom you live. Before your very eyes, I shall slay him. Save him if you can, you childish fellow !"

27. Having threatened him thus, Śālva, the master of black magic cut off the head (of the semblance) of Vasudeva and taking it with him, he entered his aerial car Śaubha that was near him in the air.

28. By nature, Kṛṣṇa was the embodiment of pure knowledge. But even he was overwhelmed with human weakness and remained plunged for a while (for a *muhūrta*) in sorrow, due to his affection for his relative (father). Then that Lord of majestic lustre realized all that scene to be nothing but an illusion of *Asura* type spread by Śālva as per instructions of Maya.

29. Just as a person awakened from the dream finds the dream-scene vanished, that Immutable Lord Kṛṣṇa, after 'waking up' (disenchantment) from the illusory effect of Śālva's Māyā, found that there was neither the messenger nor the dead body of his father on the battlefield. Seeing his enemy ranging through the sky in his aerial car Saubha, he determined to kill him.

30*. In this way, O royal sage, some sages give an in-

*. Verses 23-28 give the view of inconsistent thinkers as ŚR. points out that Balarāma never went to Yudhiṣṭhira's Rājasūya.

consistent version. They do not remember that their words will prove contradictory.

31. Where are grief, delusion, attachment or fear which are possible to be found only in the ignorant ? How can these be presumed to affect the Absolute Lord, the master of Perfect knowledge, wisdom and Divine potencies of omnipotence, omnipresence.

32*. How could there be any possibility of Lord Hari being subjected to delusion—the Lord who is the shelter of those saintly persons who through the worship and service of his feet have obtained enlightenment in the knowledge of *ātman* (the self). With this knowledge of *Ātmavidyā*, these righteous people completely destroyed wrong notions existing from times

VR. From Vyāsa's words it is clear that Balarāma was in charge of Dvāraka in Kṛṣṇa's absence at Rājasūya. Śālva did not invade Dvārakā—in Kṛṣṇa s absence. VJ. emphasizes the impossibility of Hari being deluded by the magic spell.

* *VJ.'s Text adds* :

32.1. O Scion of the Kuru race! When Kṛṣṇa heard the words spoken by them, he began to strike down Śālva along with his aerial city Saubha.

32.2. Taking up his sharp discus Sudarśana, Kṛṣṇa charged it with the spell of the missile of the Fire-god and discharged it to destroy Saubha completely.

32.3. That discus charged with the spell of the missile of the Fire-god (pronounced on it) and hurled from the fore-hand of Nārāyaṇa (Lord Kṛṣṇa) and terrific with its flames went on burning upto the region of Brahmā.

32.4. All the celestials in their aerial cars felt scorched with the heat of the discus Sudarśana, cleared out of the sky and fled in all directions.

32.5. The Sudarśana discus dazzling like a hundred suns cut asunder the city of Saubha in two and again returned to the hand of Nārāyaṇa, O king Parīkṣi t.

32.6. Thus the city (of Saubha) lay shattered in the sea. But the irresistible Śālva made his appearance with a mace in hand. The wicked fellow hurled his mace at Kṛṣṇa.

32.7. Getting into the chariot brought up by the Daitya army—a chariot equipped with a heap of arms—Śālva discharged innumerable weapons on the head of Kṛṣṇa and roared like a lion.

32.8. Hari split the mace hurled by Śālva, in three pieces with his arrows. He blew his conch Pāñcajanya and roared like a lion.

immemorial about the identification of the body with soul and thereby they have secured their own essential, infinite Lordly state.

33. While Śālva was vigorously attacking him with a volley of weapons, Kṛṣṇa, the descendant of Śūra, of unfailing prowess, wounded Śālva deeply with his arrows and shattered to pieces Śālva's armour, cut down his bow and the jewel on his head, and knocked down to pieces (Sālva's aerial car) Saubha.

34. Knocked down by the mace darted by Kṛṣṇa's hand, Saubha was splintered into thousands of pieces and fell into the water in the form of powder. Abandoning it, Śālva landed on the earth and raising his mace quickly rushed at Kṛṣṇa.

35. With a special kind of arrow called *bhalla*, Kṛṣṇa cut down Śālva's arm with the mace as he was rushing against him (to assault). In order to finish with Śālva, Kṛṣṇa took up his miraculous discus Sudarśana which was dazzling like the burning sun at the time of the destruction of the universe. (With the discus held up in the position of hurling), he shone resplendent like the Eastern mountain with the disc of the rising sun on its summits.

36. Just as (in ancient times) Indra chopped off the head of Vṛtra, Hari, with that very Sudarśana severed the head decked with a crown and ear-rings of Śālva of extensive capacity in black-magic. And there arose an outcry of grief (alas !) from his men.

37*. O king Parīkṣit ! When that sinful Śālva fell struck

*VJ.'s Text adds :

37.1. Celestial drums were sounded and showers of flowers were let down. Glorified by the sages and by bards like Sūta, Māgadha and Bandins, Hari came to his capital Dvārakā, surrounded by his armies.

37.2. He entered the charming city decorated with a number of flags and other decorative work, and with clean quadrangles besprinkled with water.

37.3. He (Kṛṣṇa) was honoured by elderly Yādavas as well as by men in the city and the rural areas. He delighted the sixteen thousand queens who were over-whelmed with love for him. Thus the son of Devaki lived happily and in joy, O descendant of Kurus.

were sounded in heaven by gods. Then Dantavaktra angrily attacked him for avenging the deaths of his friends (viz. Śiśupāla, Śālva).

## CHAPTER SEVENTYEIGHT

*Dantavaktra and Vidūratha Slain* :

*Balarāma's Pilgrimage*

*Śri Śuka said** :

1. The wicked Dantavaktra wished to demonstrate his friendship with Śiśupāla, Śālva and Pauṇḍraka who had gone to the next world (being killed by Kṛṣṇa). He wished to avenge their death by slaying Kṛṣṇa.

2. (Unaccompanied by an army or without riding a chariot) the foolish but mighty Dantavaktra rushed alone in rage with a mace in hand. Shaking the earth under his feet while walking, he confronted Kṛṣṇa.

3. Beholding him thus advancing, Kṛṣṇa quickly took up his mace and jumping down from his chariot, he resisted him as the seashore stops the flowtide of the sea.

4. Raising his mace, the foolishly arrogant king Kāruṣa (Dantavaktra) exclaimed : "How lucky it is ! I am glad that

* *VJ.'s Text adds at the beginning.*

1.1-1.2. : Having heard that Kṛṣṇa had gone to the bank of the Yamunā for the concluding bath (*avabhṛtha snāna*) of the Rājasūya sacrifice, Dantavaktra, the king of Kaliṅga, accompanied by his younger brothers and a big army consisting of elephant corps, quickly marched to ambush Kṛṣṇa while he would proceed to Dvārakā.

1.3-1.5 : Like unto a jackal obstructing a lion, the foolish Dantavaktra blockaded Kṛṣṇa who was accompanied by young Yādava princes, and was surrounded by the palanquins of his sixteen thousand queens, was followed by a group of kings, by a number of great sages, priests who officiate at sacrifices, family priests, preceptors and other Brāhmaṇas.

down with the mace and Saubha was smashed to pieces, drums you have come within the range of my sight to-day !"[1]

5*. O Kṛṣṇa ! You are the son of our maternal uncle[2]. But you are treacherous to friends (and have killed them). You Fish to slay me as well. Hence I shall kill you with my mace which is as hard as thunderbolt.

6. Being affectionate and loyal to my friends I shall pay off my debt (of friendship) to them by killing you, an enemy in the form of a cousin, just like a disease in one's body, O ignorant fool."[3]

1. As in the case of Śiśupāla's censure of Kṛṣṇa (vide *Supra* 10.74. 34-37) ŚR. gives another interpretation of Dantavaktra's reproachful speech implying Kṛṣṇa's glorification as Dantavaktra was Viṣṇu's attendant in Vaikuṇṭha.

ŚR's glorificatory interpretation of this verse :

Dantavaktra whose pride had already disappeared (at the sight of his master Viṣṇu in his original birth in Vaikuṇṭha) welcomed him, "How fortunate it is! How glad I am that your worship has presented yourself to my vision. It is certainly lucky ! Really very lucky!

*. *VJ.'s Text gives the following version* :

5.1. O Kṛṣṇa ! You are our maternal cousin but you are tracherous to friends and hunt after the wives of others. You are a traitor committing breach of trust, a murderer of relatives, fond of picking quarrels.

5.2. You have killed the son of my maternal uncle Pauṇḍraka in a battle. You have slain my cousins' brothers Rukmī and Śiśupāla. (It was Balarāma and not Kṛṣṇa who killed Rukmī).

2. Dantavaktra was the son of Śrutadevī, the sister of Vasudeva.

ŚR.'s interpretation of some adjectives to show that this is Kṛṣṇa's praise is far-fetched. For example the 2nd line in verse 5.

*atastvāṁ gadayā manda hanisye Vajrakalpayā* is taken as *gadayā amanda hanisye a-vajrakalpayā*

"O Lord capable of bearing anything! Bear up with the stroke of my gadā which is tender like a wreath of lotus.

3. ŚR.'s second interpretation of some adjectives in this verse :

*ajña-(na vidyate jñaḥ yasmāt saḥ)* Omniscient, *Vyādhi*—One who abides in the body as Inner Controller.

*hatvā*—Having arrived at the realization of your essential nature (*han* to go) *ānṛṇyam upaimi* : Pay off the debt of my ancestors (by realization of the Brahman).

"O Omniscient Lord ! Due to Sanaka's curse, I have become your cousin and enemy. But having realized your essential nature as one who abide as Inner Controller of all beings or facing you in the ways of Kṣattriyas, I shall pay off the debt of my manes."

7. Cutting to the quick Kṛṣṇa, with such harsh words like piercing an elephant with a goad, he hit Kṛṣṇa on the head with his mace and roared like a lion.

8. Though struck down with a mace in that battle, the descendant of Yadu (Kṛṣṇa) remained unshaken. Kṛṣṇa on his part hit Dantavaktra on the chest with his mace Kaumodakī.

9. With his heart shattered with the stroke of the mace, Dantavaktra vomitted blood through his mouth and he fell dead on the ground with his hair dishevelled and arms and legs outstretched.

10*. Just as it happened after the slaying of Śiśupāla, a very subtle ray of light emanated from the body of Dantavaktra and entered in the person of Kṛṣṇa — a wonderful sight indeed — while all beings were witnessing it.

11. Overwhelmed with grief for his brother, Vidūratha, Dantavaktra's brother, armed with a sword and a shield, came there having heavy sighs, but desired to kill Kṛṣṇa.

12. As he was advancing, Kṛṣṇa with his discus of sharp edge, severed off his head adorned with a diadem and ear-rings.

13-15**. Having thus demolished (the aerial car) Saubha and slain Śālva, Dantavaktra and his younger brother (Vidūratha) who were irresistible to others, Kṛṣṇa entered the decorated city of Dvārakā while his victory was being glorified

* *VJ.'s Text* : 10.1. Practically the same as verse 11 above.

10.2. He quickly jumped down from his chariot and brandishing his excellent sword and shaking the ground under his feet, he dashed against Kṛṣṇa.

10.3. When Kṛṣṇa cut off his sword with an arrow, he took up a terrible sharp-pointed *śakti*.

10.4. Determined to strike down Kṛṣṇa in the battle the foolish fellow darted towards him like an arrow discharged from a bow.

** *VJ.'s version* :

13-15.1. Having thus killed both Dantavaktra and Vidūratha in the battle, the Lord put to flight their army and captured their elephants (horses, etc.)

13.15.2. Kṛṣṇa again mounted his divine chariot *Puṣpa-ratha* which was tastefully decorated. He was accompanied by the Yādava clansmen and was praised by gods and men (in songs).

in songs by gods, men, sages, siddhas, Gandharvas (celestial singers), Vidyādharas, big serpents and by celestial damsels (*apsaras*), manes (ancestors), Yakṣas, Kinnaras and while he was being showered over with flowers and was accompanied by prominent Vṛṣṇis.

16*. In this way, the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of Yoga and the Almighty controller of the Universe is ever victorious, though to the ignorant (lit. persons with the vision of brutes), he appears at times vanquished.

17. It is reported that when Balarāma heard of the war-preparations of the Kauravas against the Pāṇḍavas, he, being neutral** (with reference to the belligerent parties) went

16* *VJ.'s Text adds after verse* 16:

16.A. O descendant of Bharata ! The noble deeds of the Lord of hallowing renown are such as cannot be recounted in tens of thousands of years (even god Brahmā and others cannot do this, what of me ?).

16. B. O chastiser of enemies ! In this way the slayer of the demon Madhu (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) began (the destruction of Rākṣasas) with the demoness Pūtanā and killed all the Asuras who were a burden to the earth.

(Here ends Chapter No. 101 in VJ.'s Text)

*VJ.'s introduction* :

Though the life of Balarāma is interwoven with that of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, two more chapters are added specifically to the life and deeds of Balarāma.

*King Parikṣit said* :

1. I pay my obeisance to the Soul of the universe who through dint of his deluding potency brought about the destruction of the eighteen *akṣauhiṇīs* of army (in the Mahābhārata war) in equal number of days.

2. By listening to his stories and deeds in aggregate, my bewilderment, wonder and fear go on increasing again and again.

3. I consider that most probably my sinfulness which is difficult to cross has ceased to be. My senses are wide awake and the mind is extremely delighted and serene.

4. My hunger and thirst have subsided. My soul (mind) is filled with ecstatic delight. It is through your grace, O expert in religion (religious discourse) that I feel that I have accomplished all my objects in this world.

5. I, however, wish to hear from you something more. When Balarāma found that his friends (both Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas) were bent on fighting and that he could not prevent them from doing so, he went to perform ablutions in sacred places. O sage rich in penance ! Narrate to me what Balarāma did.

* KD. states that Balarāma, out of sympathy, wanted to intervene between the warring parties incidently, when he would reach Kurukṣetra in the course of his pilgrimage—78.146.

away on the pretext of a pilgrimage for performing ablutions in sacred waters.

18. After taking bath at Prabhāsa[1] and propitiating gods, sages and manes (*pitṛs*) by offering oblations of water and satisfying men (by serving them food), Balarāma, surrounded by Brāhmaṇas, went from the mouth of the Sarasvatī[2] to its source.

19*. (On the way) he visited various holy places like Pṛthūdaka[3], Bindusaras[4], Tritakūpa[5], Sudarśana[6], Viśāla, Brahmatīrtha,[7] Cakratīrtha and the spot where the Sarasvatī flows to the east[8].

1. Somanath or Verawal in Saurashtra. It is also called Devapattana. Somanath is one of the famous twelve *jyotir-liṅgas* of god Mahādeva. In its neighbourhood are the spots where Yādavas' internecine battle and death of Kṛṣṇa took place.

—GDAMI, p. 157.

2. It appears that at that time, the Sarasvatī was still flowing into the Gulf of Cutch i.e. The Arabian sea. There is a small river Rauṇākṣī, also known as the Sarasvatī in *Vāmana P.*(ch. 84) which falls in the sea near Prabhāsa. But the later description shows that Balarāma followed the course of the Vedic Sarasvatī to its source.

* It appears that no geographical sequence is followed in the description of this pilgrimage.

3. Pehoa in the Karnal district, Panjab. It is 14 miles to the west of Thanesvar. This *Tīrtha* is on the Sarasvatī, near the famous (*Brahmayoni Tīrtha*—GDAMI, p. 16. Vainya performed nine *aśvamedha* sacrifices at Prthūdaka (VT).

4. VT. states this to be the hermitage of the sage Kardama near Siddhapura in Gujarat. N.L. De identifies it with thr same : Sitpur to the northwest of Ahmedabad—GDAMI, p. 38.

5. Tritakūpa—A place near the Sarasvatī. In that well Trita fell and was taken out of it by god Soma (VT). Probably this refers to the incident supposed to be the basis of RV. 1. 105.

6. In Kurukṣetra, the same as Rāma-hrada—a sacred tank to the north of Thanesvar. ŚR identifies Sudarśana and Cakra Tīrtha.—GDAMI, p. 43, 166.

7. A certain Tīrtha on the Sarasvatī.

8. The Kurukṣetra Sarasvatī is called Prāci or Eastern Sarasvatī (*Padma P. uttara khaṇḍa* (ch. 67). N. L. De states that this name is specially applied to the Sarasvatī that issues out of the Puṣkara Lake—GDAMI, p. 187.

20. And passing through the various sacred places which were on the Yamunā and the Gaṅgā, he went to the Naimiṣa forest[1] where sages were holding a prolonged sacrificial session.

21. Having come to know that the distinguished guest was Balarāma, the sages who were engaged in the prolonged sacrifice, received him with due formalities, rose from their seats, bowed down to him and worshipped him.

22. Balarāma who was thus worshipped, took his seat along with his followers. He noticed that Romaharṣaṇa, the disciple of the great sage Vyāsa, remained seated there, occupying a higher seat in front of the Brāhmaṇas.

23. Balarāma, the descendant of Madhu, got enraged when he found that Romaharṣaṇa, a sūta, did not rise from his seat to show reverence to him after his arrival, nor did he fold his palms to bow him and continued to occupy a higher seat in the presence of the Brāhmaṇas.

24. (He said to the Brāhmaṇas) "Why does this Sūta, a child of irregular marriage (between a Kṣattriya father and a Brāhmaṇa (mother) occupied a seat higher than Brāhmaṇas and us who are the protectors of religion and social code of conduct. This evil-minded fellow deserves to be killed.

25-26. In spite of being a disciple of that worshipful sage Vyāsa and having studied many *smṛtis* (codes of righteous and religious conduct—social and personal) along with all the works on *Itihāsa* and *purāṇas*, he lacks self control, has no sense of discipline or modesty; he vainly pretends to be a learned man. His scholarship and learning do not contribute to his real excellence as in the case of an actor who lacks control over his mind and senses.

27. It is with this specific purpose that I have taken incarnation in this world, viz. those imposters and hypocrites who merely pretend to be religious should be done away with by me; for such people are more sinful than the unrighteous."

28. Balarāma had desisted from slaying even the wicked ones (as he was a pilgrim then). But as fate would have it,

1. Modern Nimsar on the left bank of the Gomati in the Sitapur district of U.P. It is 20 miles to the North-West of Lucknow.
—GDAMI, p. 135.

the mighty Lord spoke these words and pierced the Sūta with the end of a *Kuśa* grass.

29. Terrified and dismayed in their minds, all the sages screamed out exclaiming, "Alas ! Alas". They said to Balarāma, "O Lord ! You have perpetrated an irreligious and unrighteous deed.

30. O descendant of Yadu ! This elevated seat of a Brāhmaṇa has been offered by us to him as also, a long period of life and indefatiguate body till the sacrificial session lasts.

31. May be unknowingly but you have committed what amounts to be the sin of killing a Brāhmaṇa. (It is true that) being a master of Yoga, even the Vedic injunction against killing a Brāhmaṇa is not binding on you.

32. O purifier of the world ! If your worship, however, performs, of your own accord, the expiation for the sin of *Brahmahatyā* without being prompted to do so by others, you will be setting a noble example to others.[1]

*The glorious Lord Balarāma said* :

33. I shall expiate for this act of *Brāhmaṇa-cide* in order tc set an example to the world. Be pleased to prescribe to me the best course of atonement for such an act.

34. Be pleased to tell me whatever is expected by you for him—such as a long span of life, strength, sound-ness of sense-organs—and I shall accomplish it for him by my Yogic potency.

*The sages replied* :

35. O Balarāma ! May you be pleased to act in such a way as will preserve the infallibility of your missile (charged in the *Kuśa* grass), the efficacy of your prowess, the inevitability of death and that our boon (that the sūta should narrate the *purāṇas* to the end of our sacrificial session) also may not prove untrue.

1. *yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janaḥ /*
*sa yat pramāṇaṁ kurute lokas tad anuvartate //* —BG.3.2

*Lord Balarāma said* :

36. It is declared by the Vedas that it is one's own self that is born as a son.[1] His son Ugraśravas will now be the expounder of the Purāṇas and he will be blessed with a long life, bodily strength and keenness of senses (and intelligence).

37. O great sages ! Be pleased to tell me what else you wish to have and I shall accomplish it for you. O learned sages ! Please consider and advise me the course of expiation for the sin committed by me unknowingly.

*The sages said* :

38. There is a terrible Dānava, named Balvala, the son of Ilvala. On every *parva* (full-moon and new-moon) days, he comes here and pollutes the sanctity of our sacrifice.

39. He showers (on the sacred sacrifice) puss, blood, faeces, urine, wine and flesh. Please kill that wicked demon and that will be the most valuable service rendered to us by you, O descendant of Daśārha.

40. Thereafter, for twelve months you go round the Bhāratavarṣa and with a serene mind take bath in the sacred waters. Thereby being absolved of the sin, you will be purified.

## CHAPTER SEVENTY-NINE

*Balvala Killed : Balarāma's Pilgrimage*

*Śrī Śuka narrated* :

1. O king Parīkṣit ! When the next *parva* (full moon) day came, a terrible, violent stormy wind swept over the place showering heavy dust and filling the whole atmosphere with obnoxious odour on all sides.

1. *aṅgād aṅgāt sambhavasi hṛdayād abhijāyase /*
*ātmā vai putra-nāmāsi sa jīva śaradaḥ śatam//*
—Kauṣitaki Up. 2.7.

**Balarāma exhorts the sages to install Ugraśravas in the place of Romaharṣaṇa and all the boons promised to him by the sages will be now effective in the case of the son of Romaharṣaṇa.**

2. Then there was a downpour of filthy things on the sacrificial ground, caused by Balvala, after which he appeared with a trident in hand.

3-4. Beholding that *asura* of gigantic body, extremely black like a heap of collyrium, with hair on the head, moustaches and beard like red-hot copper and a face terror-inspiring with its fierce tusks and terrific knit brows, Balarāma remembered (his weapons)—the pestle that shatters hostile forces and the plough which vanquishes demons. And both the weapons immediately presented themselves to him.

5. With the point of his plough, he pulled to the ground, Balvala who was ranging through the sky and full of indignation, he struck that sworn enemy of Brāhmaṇas on the head with a pestle.

6. With his forehead shattered and split open and bleeding profusely, the demon gave out a helpless yell and fell down to the ground like a mountain struck with Vajra and covered with liquid red chalk.

7. The sages applauded Balarāma (for this feat) and pronounced their unfailing benedictions. Those highly blessed sages sprinkled sacred waters on Balarāma (as *abhiṣeka*) as gods did to Indra when he killed Vṛtra.

8. They presented to Balarāma a celestial five-coloured *Vaijayantī* garland of unfading flowers (chiefly lotuses, two excellent pieces of cloth and very valuable ornaments.

9. Then with the permission of those sages, Balarāma, accompanied with Brāhmaṇas went to the Kauśikī[1] river. After taking bath therein, he proceeded to the lake[2] from which the Sarayū flows out.

10. From its source and travelling along the current of the Sarayū, Balarāma reached Prayāga. He took his bath there-

1. Modern Kośī running from Nepal by the western border of the Purnea district in Bihar. The river has been tamed by dams now. Was it in the *Kokāmukha tīrtha* where Balarāma took his bath? —SGAMI, pp. 278-80, 340.

2. The Purāṇas believe that the Mānasa lake is the source of the Sarayū. But the river rises in the mountains of Kumaun and after its junction with the *Kālī nadī*, it is called the Sarayū. Ayodhyā is on its bank.
—GDAMI, p. 181-82.

in, offered water oblations to gods (sages and manes) and proceeded to the hermitage of Pulaha.[1]

11-12. He bathed in the Gomatī, Gaṇḍakī, Vipāśā[2] the Śoṇa and visited Gayā and worshipped his ancestors. After taking his bath at the confluence of the Gaṅgā with the sea, he met Paraśurāma and paid his respects to him on the Mahendra[3] hill. He took bath in the seven branches of the Godāvarī, the Veṇā, the Pampā[4] and the river Bhīmā.

13. After paying a visit to the temple of Skanda, he went to Śrī Śaila[5]. The great Balarāma then visited the holy mountain Veṅkaṭa in the Draviḍa land.

14. Lord Balarāma then visited the city of Kāñcī[6] known as Kāmakoṣṇī[7] (Kāmakoṭī) and the great river Kāverī, he paid visit to the holy place known as Śrīraṅga[8] (Srirangam) where Lord Hari ever abides.

15. He then went to the Ṛṣabha[9] hill, a sacred place dedicated to Hari. He then visited Setu[10]—the dam built across the sea (by Rāmacandra) where people are absolved of very heinous sins.

1. The same as Śālagrāma, near the source of the Gaṇḍak —GDAMI, p. 161 & 174.

2. The Beas. It is difficult to plot the route followed by Balarāma as the *purāṇa* writer has vague idea of the geography of north India.

3. The range of hills extending from Orissa to the district of Madura. It is applied to Eastern Ghats in general—SGAMI, p. 61. N.L. De states that Mahendra hills separate Ganjam from the valley of the Mahanadi—GDAMI p. 119.

4. A tributary of the Tuṅga-bhadrā. It rises in the Rsyamūka hills in Bellary district.

5. Also called Śrī Parvata (GDAMI, p. 193) It is a hill in the Nallamalur range and a famous Tīrtha in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh.—SGAMI, p. 336.

6. Modern Conjeveram on the river Palar, 43 miles south-west of Madras. The eastern part of the town is called *Viṣṇu Kāñci* and western part as *Śiva kāñcī* —GDAMI, p. 86

7. N.L. De identifies it with Kumbhakonam but he is doubtful about it.—GDAMI, p. 86.

8. Śrīraṅgam, 2 miles to the north of Trichinopoly, Tamil Nad. Famous for its Viṣṇu temple (Śrī Raṅgam) —GDAMI, p. 193.

9. The Palni hills in Madura. They form the northern portion of the Malaya mountain. The hills are locally known as *Varāha Parvata*—GDAMI, p. 169.

10. The Adam's bridge between India and Ceylon Rameshwaram is the first island in this chain of islets. It is called *Saṅgama Tīrtha* also —GDAMI, p. 184.

16. Balarāma gave ten thousand cows to the Brāhmaṇas there. He then visited the rivers Kṛta-mālā, Tāmraparṇī and the mountain-chain called the Malaya (one of the seven important mountain ranges in India).

17. There he paid respects to the sage Agastya who was established on the mountain. After receiving blessings from him and with his permission, Balarāma went to the south-sea where he visited the goddess Durgā (Pārvatī), known there as Kanyā (at Kanyā Kumārī).

18. Next he visited the sacred place called Phālguna[1] and the lake called Pañcāpsaras (five celestial damsels) noted for the special presence of Viṣṇu. He performed ablution therein and gave ten thousand cows (to Brāhmaṇas).

19. Then Lord Balarāma went to Kerala, Trigarta.[2] (From thence he proceeded to the famous Śaivite holy place Gokarṇa where god Śiva is ever-present.

20. Having visited the shrine of Pārvatī (designated as Āryā) on the island, Balarāma proceeded to Śūrpāraka (Sopara, Dist. Thana, Maharashtra). After taking bath in the Tāpī, the Payoṣṇī[3] and the Nirvindhyā[4], he entered the Daṇḍaka forest.

21. (From that forest) he entered the river Narmadā on the banks of which is situated the city of Māhiṣmatī[5]. He performed ablution in the Manutīrtha and again returned to Prabhāsa.

22. Having heard from the Brāhmaṇas the report of the destruction of all Kṣattriya princes (participating) in the war

1. ŚR identifies it with Anantapur, fiftysix miles to the south-east of Bellary. Pañcāpsarā tīrtha is near it. VB. calls it 'Anantaśayana'. He states that the five divine damsels were restored to their original status by Arjuna. Hence it is called *Pañcāpsaras*.

2. North Canara in Karnataka—GDAMI, p. 205.

3. The Pain-gaṅgā. a tributary of the Godavari—SGAMI, p. 57.

4. The Newuj, a tributary of the Chambal flowing between the Betwa and the Kalisindh—SGAMI, p. 57.

5. Modern Maheshwar, forty miles to the south of Indore. It was the capital of Haihayas. In the Buddhist canon in the *Mahā Govinda sutta* (*Dīgha Nikāya* 29.36) it is called Māhissati and it was the capital of Avanti (Malwa).

between Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas, he considered it as the removal of the burden of the earth.

23. The scion (or the delight) of the Yadu's race (Balarāma) went to Kurukṣetra with the desire of preventing Bhīma and Duryodhana from their single combat with their maces on the battle-field.

24. As soon as Yudhiṣṭhira, the twins Nakula, Sahadeva and even Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna saw him, they bowed to him but they kept quiet, as they were afraid why he had come over there and what he wanted to say.

25. He saw both Bhīma and Duryodhana, with maces in hand, both highly enraged and bent on vanquishing the other, were making wonderful manoeuvres (in the combat with maces). He spoke to them :

26. "O king (Duryodhana), O Bhīma, both of you are warriors equal in strength. I think one of you is superior in physical strength while the other excels in training.

27. As both of you are equal in prowess, I do not see that either of you will be victorious or vanquished. Hence, such a fruitless combat should be stopped altogether.

28. O Parīkṣit ! The enmity of these two inveterate adversaries was so deepseated that neither of them accepted his advice, though it was salutary and significant. For they did not forget their mutual offensive words and the wicked deeds.

29. Considering that the combat was destined (as a fruit of their past acts and hence inevitable), Balarāma returned to Dvārakā. He was received there warmly by Ugrasena and other relatives who were glad at his arrival.

30. (Balarāma took him with all the necessary materials and assistants for performing sacrifices). He again visited the Naimiṣa forest. The sages, acting as his sacrificial priests, gladly helped Balarāma whose person was constituted of sacrifice (or sacrifices formed a part of his personality) and who kept himself aloof from the (Kaurava-Pāṇḍava) war, in the performance of all sacrifices.

31. The almighty Lord Balarāma imparted to them highly pure spiritual wisdom by virtue of which the sages re-

alized that the whole universe is in their Self and that their self pervaded all the universe.

32. Having performed the concluding bath of the sacrifice along with his consort Revatī and accompanied by his clansmen, relatives and friends, Balarāma who put on excellent dress and was well adorned, shone like the moon radiating its own (moon-) light.

33. Innumerable are other feats and exploits (of such a nature) of the mighty Balarāma who is infinite (or Ananta or the serpent Śeṣa himself) and incomprehensible by nature. He has assumed the form of a mortal being by his own Māyā potency.

34. He who remembers and contemplates over the feats of Balarāma who performed miraculous deeds, both in the morning and the evening, becomes a beloved of the infinite Lord Viṣṇu.

## CHAPTER EIGHTY*

### *The Story of the Brāhmaṇa Śrīdāman*[1]

*King Parikṣit requested* :

1. O worshipful sage ! We desire to hear of other glorious exploits of the noble-souled Kṛṣṇa of infinite powers and glory, O master.

2. What person (on earth) who has the power of discernment of what is excellent and the quintessence of things but has suffered sorely from the shafts of passions and desires, and had once the opportunity of listening to the holy and true

* VJ. : Before beginning the description of Kṛṣṇa's placid life at home in Dvārakā after the Mahābhārata war, VJ.'s text describes the interim activition of Kṛṣṇa such as visiting Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Gāndhārī and departure from Hastināpura. (for this refer Appendix, Chapter eighty-I.)

1. The text of the Bh. P. is silent about the name of the Brāhmaṇa. The name given here is on the strength of the colophon of the chapter.

stories of the Lord of hallowed renown, would desist from listening to them, O Brāhmaṇa sage ?

3. That is the only real speech (tongue) with which Lord's excellences are extolled. Those hands deserve their designation as hands which engage themselves in his service. That mind is worth its name which contemplates on him who abides in all the mobile and immobile creation. Only that ear (is the blessed and) deserves to be called such (viz. the ear) which listens to the holy stories of the Lord.

4. That head deserves to be called such as bows down to him as manifested in both mobile or immobile forms (or lays itself on the ground to bow to him and his votaries). That is the real eye which sees the Lord (in everything and everywhere). Those are the real parts of the body, which always resort to the waters that wash the feet of the Lord as well as those of his devotees (i.e. sprinkle themselves and get purified with those waters).[1]

*Sūta said* :

5. When the worshipful son of Bādarāyaṇa was thus requested by king Parīkṣit, Śuka whose heart is immersed in (the meditations of) the glorious Lord Vāsudeva, said.

*Śri Śuka began to narrate* :

6. There was a certain Brāhmaṇa friend of Lord Kṛṣṇa. He was a pastmaster in the knowledge of the Vedas (or the supreme Brahman), free from attachment to the objects of senses. He was perfectly serene in mind and possessed complete control over his senses.

7. Though he was leading the life of a householder, he subsisted on whatever came his way without asking or trying for it. He was (naturally) ill-clad and his wife also who was like him (had no sufficient clothing to cover her person) but was of the same spirit, had grown emaciated with hunger.

8. That poverty-stricken chaste lady who was devoted to her husband but whose body was trembling (with weakness)

1. VT. cautions that this sprinkling is limited to the limbs of the upper part (*nābher ūrdhvam*) of the body.

and with a withered countenance, approached her husband and submitted :

9. "Is it not a fact, O Brāhmaṇa, that Kṛṣṇa, the Consort of Lakṣmī incarnate, is a personal friend of your worshipful self? The glorious Lord, the leader of Sātvatas, is a friend and devotee of Brāhmaṇas and a worthy asylum to those who seek shelter in him.

10. Blessed Sir, be pleased to approach him who is the ultimate resort of the righteous and saintly people. He will (immediately understand your circumstances and) bestow abundant wealth on you, who are a poverty-stricken householder.

11. That Lord of Bhoja, Vṛṣṇi and Andhaka clans now resides at Dvārakā. If his lotus feet are remembered, he gives away even his own self (to them. He is so generous). Will not that father and preceptor of the world confer wealth and worldly desires on his devotees, as both these are not very important comparatively (as gifts to his votaries).

12. When he was thus softly entreated by his wife many times, the soft-natured Brāhmaṇa thought, "It will be a supreme blessing at least that I shall gain at the sight of the Lord of holy renown.

13. With these considerations, he made up his mind to go (to Dvārakā). (As it was customary not to see a king or a guest empty-handed, but to offer him something as a present) he said, "Is there anything in the house worth giving as a present to Kṛṣṇa? If so, give that with me, O blessed lady."

14. The lady solicited the (neighbouring) Brāhmaṇas to give her some *pṛthukas* (fried and beaten rice). Having secured four handfuls of such rice, she tyed them up in a rag and handed over them to her husband as 'Present' to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

15. With those handfuls of rice as present, the Brāhmaṇa travelled the city of Dvārakā anxiously thinking all the while, "How will it be possible for me to gain a sight of Lord Kṛṣṇa?"

16. Accompanied by other Brāhmaṇas, he crossed the three check posts of guards[1] and the defensive ramparts of the city

1. According to verse quoted by VT. a *gulma* or checkpost consists of nine elephants, nine chariots, twentyseven horsemen and fortyfive foot-soldiers.

and the mansions of Andhakas and Vṛṣṇis who followed the path of righteousness ordained by Lord Kṛṣṇa—which were inaccessible to other persons.

17. Out of the sixteen thousand palaces of the queens of Kṛṣṇa, the Brāhmaṇa entered one of them which appeared specially affluent and splendid, with the feeling of supreme bliss in merging with the Brahman.

18. Noticing from a distance that the Brāhmaṇa was coming, Lord Kṛṣṇa who then occupied a sofa with his beloved (Rukmiṇī), instantly rose from his seat, went forward to receive him and joyfully embraced him closely with both of his arms.

19. The lotus-eyed Lord felt extremely happy at the touch of the person of his beloved friend, the Brāhmaṇa sage and he shed tears of joy from his eyes.

20-21. Then he seated him on his own couch; and personally washed his feet and sprinkled his own head with the drops of water with which he washed the Brāhmaṇa's feet. O king Parīkṣit, the Lord who purifies the whole universe, smeared the Brāhmaṇa with excellent perfumes such as pastes of sandal aloe-wood and saffron.

22. Having worshipped his friend with perfumed fumes and rows of lamps, he offered him a cow as a gift, a betel-leaf (with its usual contents of areca-nut powder, cloves, etc.) and greeted him warmly with sweet words of welcome.

23. It is said that the queen Rukmiṇī herself, with a *chowrie* in her hand, fanned the ill-clad Brāhmaṇa of emaciated dusty body the veins of which were visible.

24. The ladies in the harem were really astonished to see that a semi-nude Brāhmaṇa is worshipped with so much affection by Lord Kṛṣṇa of such a spotless reputation.

25-26. (They commented) : "What meritorious act must have been performed by this naked beggarly Brāhmaṇa, destitute of wealth and censured as worthless in the world, that he was greatly honoured by the preceptor of the three worlds, the abode of the goddess Śrī. But he discarded the goddess Lakṣmī who was occupying the sofa with him and embraced him as if he were his elder brother."

27. O king ! Holding each other by the hand, they recounted to each other the sweet stories of the incidents that

happened while both of them lived together in their teacher's hermitage in their student days.

*The glorious Lord enquired* :

28. O dear Brāhmaṇa, expert in religion ! Please tell me if, after the completion of your course of education and after honouring your teacher with the payment of fee for education, you have married a wife suitable to you or have not done so as yet.

29. I learn that even as a householder, your mind is not interested in objects of enjoyment and being a learned man you are not so much after money.

30. Like unto myself who perform action to set example to the world, there are some people who discharge their duties without being affected by desires at heart and avoid the fascinations created by the celestial potency of the Lord.

31. Do you remember, O Brāhmaṇa, our stay in the house of our preceptor? It is there that a twice-born one knows everything worth knowing from his preceptor and ultimately reaches beyond the darkness (of *saṁsāra*).

32. Dear friend ! He from whom one is born (and thus invested with the body) is the first *guru* (preceptor). He from whom one becomes twice-born (by performance of the *upanayana*—investiture of the sacred thread) and becomes eligible for study of Vedas and performance of religious duties is the second preceptor. And one who imparts spiritual knowledge directly to persons belonging to all *āśramas* (stages of life)—is the Third *guru*(preceptor) and is veritably identical with me.

33. (Hence, those who resort to me as the preceptor giving enlightenment in spiritual knowledge, and cross the *saṁsāra* are the really intelligent ones) O Brāhmaṇa ! Those who, in this mundane existence, obtain oral instructions (in spiritual matters) from me as their preceptor, easily cross the ocean of *saṁsāra*, as they know the real essence in the order of *varṇas* (social classes) and *āśramas* (stages of life).

34. I abide in all beings as their Inner Controller. Just as I am pleased by rendering services (to the spiritual preceptor), I shall not be pleased (that much) by performance of sacrifices (or the duties of a householder's life), by birth in

excellent family, by the performance of the investiture of the sacred thread of *upanayana* (implying the observance of duties of a *brahmacārin* or a celibate person). Nor shall I be pleased so much with penance (in the *Vānaprastha* stage of life) or by the path of quietism (followed by *sannyāsins*).

35. Do you remember, O Brāhmaṇa, the incident which happened while we were staying at our preceptor's hermitage and were once sent by our preceptor's wife to bring fuel.

36. And how when we entered into the thick jungle, suddenly, out of season, there was an outbreak of a mighty violent storm, heavy down-pour of rain and terrible roaring of thunder over our heads.

37. In the meanwhile the sun set and all the quarters were enveloped in darkness and the undulations of the ground being covered under water we could not discern the high or the low level of the land.

38. Then failing to discern the direction to be followed and sorely beaten by the repeated violent blasts of wind and showers in the forest flooded with water, we were afraid and holding each other by hand, wandered here and there.

39. Having come to know of this after sunrise, our teacher Sāndīpani came in search of us with his disciples and found us in a bewildered condition.

40. He cried out, "O my children, you have undergone extreme hardships for our sake. Life or the soul is verily dearest to all. But you evinced devotion unto me disregarding even that (your life).

41. It is in this manner that a good disciple should repay his debt (of gratitude) to his preceptor, namely that he should offer with a sincere heart, whatever he has with him (including his very life).

42. O prominent among twice-borns ! I am really very much pleased. Let all your desires be fulfilled. May your knowledge of the Vedas never fail you either here or hereafter."

43. Many other such incidents took place during our residence in the house of our preceptor. It is by the grace of the preceptor that a man becomes perfect and eligible for supreme peace.

*The Brāhmaṇa (Śrīdāman) replied :*

44. O God of gods ! O Preceptor of the universe ! When we stayed in the preceptor's house, what was there that we did not accomplish through the help of you whose resolutions always turn out to be true.

45. O Almighty Lord ! Your person is constituted of the Vedas and you are the repository of all blessings; your stay in the house of the preceptor is certainly a wonderful imitation of the ways of the world.

## CHAPTER EIGHTYONE

*The Story of the Parched Rice*

(The story of Śrīdāman continued)

*Śri Śuka said :*

1. While Hari was conversing with the prominent Brāhmaṇa on such matters he, knowing as he did the minds of all beings, spoke to him smilingly.

2. Lord Kṛṣṇa was friendly to Brāhmaṇas and he was certainly the asylum of the pious. Looking at his dear Brāhmaṇa friend with an affectionate glance, he laughed loudly and asked in a joking mood:

*The Lord said:*

3. "What present have you brought for me from your house, O Brāhmaṇa? Even the slightest offering—a particle given with affection by my devotees is considered by me as very great, but even if a lot of presents are given to me by one who is not my votary, they are not conducive to my joy or satisfaction.

4. A person who devoutly offers me a leaf, a flower, a fruit or even water, I enjoy that which has been brought to me with devotion by a person of controlled and pure mind."

5. Even though the Brāhmaṇa was thus requested, he felt so much abashed that he did not hand over the present of

*pṛthukas* (parched, flattened rice) to the Lord of the goddess Śrī and simply hung his head, O king.

6-7. But the Lord can directly see what goes in the minds of all beings and he knew definitely the cause of Śridāman's visit. He thought to himself, "This Brāhmaṇa never approached me or worshipped me for money. This friend of mine has come here for pleasing his virtuous wife (in compliance of her entreaty). I shall bestow upon him wealth which is rare even for immortal gods.

8. Thinking thus within himself, he, of his own accord, snatched from under the clothes of the Brāhmaṇa, the parched flattened rice tied up in a rag (and brought by way of present to Śrī Kṛṣṇa) asking him, "What is it ?

9. My dear friend ! This present (parched rice-eatable) is exceedingly to my liking. These flattened parched rice will thoroughly satisfy me who am the Soul of the universe."

10. Saying thus, he ate handful of those rice and took another handful for eating when his consort Śrī (i.e. Rukmiṇī who was so devoted to him caught hold of the hand of the Supreme[1] Lord, (claiming that other handful of rice to herself).

11. "O Soul of the Universe ! This (handful of eaten rice) is more than sufficient in granting him all kinds of wealth and prosperity both here and hereafter. This much is quite enough for your satisfaction."

12. The Brāhmaṇa passed that night happily in the palace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He partook of the feast and drink and felt himself to be in the celestial world itself.

13. The next morning, he set out for his home. He was however, followed some distance by Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Creator of the Universe, the very embodiment of essential spiritual bliss who delighted him with his friendly talk.

14. But the Brāhmaṇa who was happy with seeing his great friend, returned home abashed on account of the mean-

1. ŚR. explains the significance of this prohibition to eat another handful as follows : one handful is enough to bestow on the poor Brāhmaṇa all the wealth and affluence. But by eating another handful, she will be at the service of the Brāhmaṇa (instead of Lord Kṛṣṇa)—a calamity she wanted to avoid.

ness of his heart as he did not get any money from Kṛṣṇa nor did he of his own accord request him for it.

15. (On the way, he said to himself): "How wonderful ! The Lord is known for his friendliness to Brāhmaṇas which has been personally experienced by me, as the bearer of the goddess Lakṣmī on his bosom held me in close embrace—me who am the wretchedmost.

16. What a world of difference there is between me, a poverty-stricken sinner and Lord Kṛṣṇa, the abode of Lakṣmī. But I have been embraced by him with both of his arms because of my birth as a Brāhmaṇa (so kind and friendly he is to Brāhmaṇas).

17. Just like a brother, I was seated on the same sofa that was occupied by his beloved queen. Fatigued as I was, I was fanned by the Queen herself with a chowry in her hand.

18. I was adored like a god by Kṛṣṇa, the God of gods who treats Brāhmaṇas as his deities. He rendered me the highest service by personally shampooing my feet, applying sandal-pastes, etc.

19. Worship of his feet is the primary cause for men to be blessed with happiness in heaven or the bliss in the *Mokṣa* and all the affluence available either in this world or the nether-world and of mastery over all miraculous powers (*Siddhis*).

20. The Lord thought that if a penniless fellow (like me) should gain wealth, it would turn his head and would not remember me. It is with this consideration that the merciful Lord has not bestowed any wealth on me."

21. While he was musing thus, he arrived at the site of his home-stead. And Lo ! It was surrounded on all sides by a palace several storeys high and resplendent like the sun, fire and the moon.

22. It was surrounded with wonderfully beautiful pleasure gardens and groves swarming with the melodiously warbling birds and with pools and tanks in which various types of lilies, lotuses, night-lotuses were in full blossom.

23. It was manned by well-adorned male attendants and beautiful female attendants with gazelle-like eyes. The

Brāhmaṇa could not recognise what it was, whose place it was and how was it that it was transformed so wonderfully.

24. While the Brāhmaṇa was pondering over that metamorphosis (of his humble home-stead) god-like glamorous men and women advanced to welcome the highly fortunate Brāhmaṇa with excellent vocal and instrumental music.[1]

25. Hearing that her husband had returned, the Brāhmaṇa's wife was transported with ecstatic delight. And in her joyous impatience, she hurriedly came out of the house (to receive him) like unto the goddess Lakṣmī incarnate coming out of her (heavenly) abode.

26. At the sight of her husband, the chaste lady had her eyes full of tears of love and eagerness. (Out of shyness) she closed her eyes and mentally paid respects to him and embraced him in her mind.

27. He was astonished to see his wife gloriously glamorous like a celestial damsel and shining (in her deportment) in the midst of maid-servants adorned with necklaces of gold coins.

28. Being beside himself with joy, he entered in the company of his wife, his own mansion which was furnished with hundred(s) of columns of precious stones and which resembled the palace of the great Indra.

29. His palace was furnished with beds white (and soft) like the foam of milk. The bedsteads were of ivory chased in gold and the fans and *chowries* had gold handles.

30. The seats were of gold provided with soft cushions. And wreathes of pearls were hanging from brilliant canopies.

31. The palace walls were of pure crystals studded with big emeralds and in them he saw excellent dolls of precious stones holding refulgent jewel lamps in their hands (to illumine the room).

1. VT in his com. on Verse 22-23 clarifies that when Śridāman stayed that night at Dvārakā and his wife in her humble cottage, this miraculous transformation of her cottage took place. When she got up and was astonished to see the change, the attendants explained how this metamorphosis was due to Lord Kṛṣṇa's, Grace. So in order that her husband should not feel confused, she instructed the attendants to receive him, etc.

32. Beholding such abundance of wealth, affluence and luxury, the Brāhmaṇa, with a dispassionate mind began to reflect upon that 'cause-less' un-sought-for windfall of wealth in his care.

33. "I am indeed unfortunate (from my childhood) and am confirmed in eternal poverty. But the cause of this unexpected prosperity can be traced to nothing else but the gracious visit (I had the privilege to obtain) of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the leader of Yadus, the master of infinite wealth.

34. My friend, the foremost of the Dāśārhas is infinitely liberal and is perfect in all blessings. Though he bestows abundantly upon his suppliants like the rain-god, he regards his gift as insignificant and nominal. Knowing the minds of his devotees he gives immense riches to them but does not promise them directly. (He is a silent but highly munificent donor).

35. Although what he gives is immensely abundant, he looks upon it as very little. And whatever insignificant is offered by his friends, he regards it as very great. That high-souled affectionate friend accepted with pleasure only a handful of the parched, flattened rice taken by me for him.

36. May I, in every future birth, be blessed with his good-will, friendship, love and service. May I have the fortune of associating myself with his devotees and may I cherish (ever-increasing) devotion to that abode of excellences and glorious powers.

37. For the Eternal Omniscient glorious Lord himself notices the downfall of the rich caused by the pride of their wealth, and does not wish to confer wonderful affluence, kingship and other spiritual powers or authorities on his devotee (even though he may solicit it) but grants them to the shortsighted ones.

38. Having come to this conclusion by intelligent thinking, the Brāhmaṇa who was devoutly and excessively attached to Kṛṣṇa, did not become much attached to those pleasures, but with the intention of renouncing them, he enjoyed those pleasures with his wife, but with little attachment to them.

39. To the Almighty Lord Hari, the God of gods, the

Lord and Protector of Sacrifices, Brāhmaṇas are his deities. To him, nothing is higher then Brāhmaṇas.

40. In this way, the Brāhmaṇa friend of the Lord realized that the Unvanquished Lord Kṛṣṇa is easily agreeable to the will of his devotees. His personal bonds (of ignorance or attachment) were cut asunder by the force of his intensive meditation. And in a short while, he attained to the Lord's region (Vaikuṇṭha), the highest goal of the righteous people.

41. A person who listens to this account of the grace showered on a Brāhmaṇa by the God who is friendly to Brāhmaṇas attains devotion unto the Lord and becomes free from the bonds of Karmas.

## CHAPTER EIGHTYTWO[1]

*Meeting of Vṛṣṇis and Gopas of Vṛndāvana*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. On one occasion, while Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa were staying at Dvārakā, there occurred a complete eclipse of the sun, as it was at the time of deluge.

2. Being informed of it (beforehand astronomically), all (religious-minded) people from all sides went to the sacred place called Syamantapañcaka (Kurukṣetra) with the object of securing merits.

3. It was at that sacred place that Paraśurāma, the most prominent warrior, caused those big pools filled with the bloods of kings, while attempting to exterminate all Kṣattriyas from the earth.

4. Though the glorious Lord Paraśurāma was untouched by any *Karma* (despite his punitive action), in order to set a model example to people, he performed a sacrifice there for expiation of that sin (of killing Kṣattriyas) as an ordinary person will have to do.

1. The additional verses from VJ.'s Text are added here from Ch. 70 as printed on pp. 309-310 of the Vrindaban edition.

5. People from all over Bhāratavarṣa came to that most important place of pilgrimage.

*VJ.'s Text adds* :

5A-B. Śrī Kṛṣṇa accompanied with the palanquins of his sixteen thousand queens, by his sons, grandsons, multitudes of citizens, army-units, courtesans, she-elephants, by bevies of ladies from the city and other women-friends.

5-6. Vṛṣṇis as well as (elderly persons like) Akrūra, Vasudeva and Āhuka assembled to that sacred place to absolve themselves of their sins. And Gada, Pradyumna, Sāmba and others did the same.

7-8. Along with Sucandra (Rukmiṇī's son Cārucandra), Śuka and Sāraṇa, Aniruddha and the chief of the army Kṛtavarmā were posted for the protection of the city. With their chariots resembling celestial cars, with fleet horses springing like waves, with trumpeting elephants like thundering clouds and men appearing splendid like celestial beings (Vidyādharas), Yādavas who were adorned with wreaths of gold appeared extremely splendid and pompous on the way.[1]

1. *VJ.'s Text adds*:

8.1-2. With loud chantings of Vedic hymns and playing of instrumental music, and in accompaniment of the flourish of the sounds of conchs and beating of drums, they went on singing and repeating the name of Kṛṣṇa and Govinda continuously. In this way, they filled all the quarters with great noise as they went, O best of Kurus.

8.3. As they reached the holy place Syamantapañcaka, well known all over the three worlds, they built up hutments (dwelling places) with thatched roof, matting and wood (lit. with long grass and sticks).

8.4 Tents with blankets, deerskin and canvass were pitched up for kings. They were hundreds and thousands in number and had a variety of forms.

8.5 There arrived a number of kings, thousands of Brāhmaṇas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras and innumerable persons of lower castes.

8.6. And noble-souled sages of high reputation and of praiseworthy observance of vows, with preceptors, some maintainers of consecrated fire (*agni-hotrins*), some life-long celibate students and householders.

8.7. The blind, the deaf, the hunchbacks, dwarfs and physically handicapped people, persons with retarded intelligence, dumb persons—all are desirous of being absolved of their past actions.

8.8 All of them adorned their heads with the dust on the lotus-feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, beautified with ornaments like bracelets, armlets (both on the lower and upper part of the forearm), garlands and ear-rings.

9. Like celestials ranging through the sky, along with their wives, they put on heavenly garlands, rich clothes. Arriving at Syamanta-pañcaka, those highly blessed people took their bath, observed a fast and were perfectly serene and self possessed in mind.

10. They gave to Brāhmaṇas gifts of cows covering them with clothes and adoring them with garlands and chains of gold. (And after the eclipse was over) the Vṛṣṇis again took a bath as per formalities in the pools created by Paraśurāma.

11-12. The Vṛṣṇis to whom Kṛṣṇa was their deity, served delicious food to prominent Brāhmaṇas and prayed, "May we be blest with constant devotion to Kṛṣṇa. With the permission of the Brāhmaṇas, they broke their fast. And they took rest according to their wish and pleasure under the dense, cool shade of trees. They interviewed their friendly kings and relatives who congregated there (for the same religious purpose).

13-14. They saw kings (their friends and relatives) of Matsya, Uśīnara, Kosala, Vidarbha, Kuru, Sṛñjaya, Kamboja, Kekaya, Madra, Kuntī, Ānarta and Kerala and hundreds of many other kings who were their allies or strangers. They met their friends and well-wishers like Nanda and other cowherds and Gopīs (cowherd women) who were anxiously longing to meet them.

15. Owing to overwhelming ecstatic joy of mutually looking at each other, their lotus-like hearts and faces became fully blossomed and full of splendour. They hugged each other in close embrace, with tears of joy trickling from their eyes; their hair stood on their ends; their voice choked with emotion and faltering—all of them were transported with joy.

16. Looking at each other with affectionate side-glances and exceedingly friendly smiles, the women also embraced each other closely, pressing against each other their breasts which were besmeared with saffron and their eyes full of tears of joy and affection.

17. After paying respects to the elders, they were bowed by their juniors. Welcoming each other, they enquired after the well-being (of their friends and relatives) and they told each other the stories of Kṛṣṇa.

18. When Kuntī saw her brothers, sisters, their sons, her parents, sisters-in-law and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, she felt relief as her grief soothed during her conversation with them.

*Kunti said* :

19. Dear (elder) brother ! I feel I am unlucky as no desire of mine becomes fulfilled. Or it may be that excellent-most brothers like you do not remember of me, even though I am entangled in calamities.

20. It appears that friends, relatives, sons, brothers—nay even parents—do not remember their own relative if the Fate frowns upon him.

*Vasudeva replied* :

21. Mother (a term of endearment for younger sister) ! Please do not blame us, who are ordinary mortals—toys or pawns in the hands of Providence. The world is completely under the control of the Almighty Lord and everyone acts or is compelled to act according to his will.

22. (As you know it) due to the harassment of Kaṁsa all of us had to flee and were scattered in all directions. Dear sister ! It is only recently that the Providence has rehabilitated us together.

*Śri Śuka said* :

23. The kings who were duly worshipped by Vasudeva, Ugrasena and other prominent Yādavas felt deeply satisfied and delighted at the sight of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

24-26. (Those kings and prominent persons were) Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the son of Ambikā, Gāndhārī and all her sons, Pāṇḍavas and their queens, Kuntī, Sṛñjaya, Vidura, Kṛpa, Kuntibhoja, Virāṭa, Bhīṣmaka and Nagnajit, the mighty; Purujit, Drupada, Śalya, Dhṛṣṭaketu along with the king of Kāśī; Damaghoṣa, Viśālākṣa, the kings of Mithilā, Madra and Kekaya; Yudhāmanyu, Suśarmā, Bāhlīka along with his princes.

27. O king of kings ! These princes and those who were the allies of Yudhiṣṭhira were astonished to behold the per-

sonality of Lord Kṛṣṇa which was the abode of the goddess Śrī (of affluence and beauty) in the company of his queens.

28. Thereupon, the kings who were duly honoured by Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa were greatly delighted and eloquently praised Vṛṣṇis who were the relatives of Lord Kṛṣṇa and were under his protection.

29. (They complimented:) "O Ugrasena, the king of Bhojas! Inasmuch as you are lucky to have constantly the sight of lord Kṛṣṇa who is very difficult to be seen even by Yogins, you must deem to have accomplished the purpose of human existence among all men born in this world.

30. His spotless glory sung by the Vedas purifies the world; so does the water that washes his feet and his word, viz. the Vedic Śāstra[1]. The earth which has all its potential productive capacity burnt up by the Time-Spirit, has all her powers resuscitated by the touch of his lotus-feet. Hence, she yields to us all our desired objects.

31. The householder's life paves the way to hell. But though you lead that (householder's) life, Lord Viṣṇu himself who makes one unattached both to celestial life as well as salvation (*mokṣa*) stays in your houses, and you can see him, touch him, go after him, speak with him, sit close to him, eat with him, share the bed with him and have contacts and relations with him.[2]

*Śrī Śuka said* :

32. Learning that Yādavas of whom Kṛṣṇa is prominent, have arrived there, Nanda accompanied with Gopas and carts loaded with milk-products, came there with a desire to see them.

33. Seeing Nanda all the Yādavas were overjoyed and rose up to receive him, as the bodies do after the return of

1. VJ. : The *Śāstra* such as The *Brahmasūtras* issued out of Lord Kṛṣṇa's mouth purifies the world.

2. VJ. : You have really accomplished the highest purpose in your life as you are in direct contact with Lord Viṣṇu—The source of the bliss in the heaven and in the Mokṣa. He of his own accord has been in your house, so in your case householder's life will not lead to hell.

vital breath. Being extremely anxious to see him for a long time, they embraced him closely.

34. Vasudeva was especially pleased. Being overwhelmed with affection, he embraced him fast, remembering how Kaṁsa subjected him to harrowing persecutions and how he had to entrust his son to Nanda's care at his Gokula.

35. Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma embraced and bowed to their (foster) parents. But due to overwhelming affection, and the throat being choked with emotions (lit. tears of joy) they could not utter a word, O best of Kurus.

36. The highly blessed Yaśodā placed both the sons on her seat (v.l. on her lap) and clasping them together in her arms in close embrace, forgot her (longfelt) distress (of separation from them).

37. Remembering their close friendship with Yaśodā, both Rohiṇī and Devakī embraced her. With their voice choked with emotions (tears), they exclaimed in faltering tones.

38. "O queen of Vraja ! Who can ever forget your everlasting (act of) friendship. Even if one attains to the fortune and status of the Lord of Heaven, the great debt (of your friendship) is unrepayable in this world.

39. Worshipful lady ! These two children who had not seen their own parents, were entrusted to your filial care. They lived under your care like eyes protected by eye-lids without any fear from any quarter. You gave them protection, nourishment, loving care, caressing growth and development. For the good and righteous persons do not discriminate between a child who is theirs and the one who is not theirs.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

40. Having seen their beloved Kṛṣṇa after a pretty long time, they (yearned to gaze at him continuously without the interruption of winking of the eyelids and so) they blamed the Creator who created the eyelids and thus interrupted (even for a wink), his vision. Mentally they closely embraced him, who was ushered in their hearts through their eyes, and instantly became merged in him—an accomplishment not

within the easy reach of Yogins who always practice to attain one-ness with him through Yogic meditation.

41. (Kṛṣṇa assumed as many forms as there were Gopīs. And at night in a secluded place simultaneously met them all severally). When the Lord saw them in that (absorbed) state of meditation, he met each of them, in privacy, embraced them, enquired about their health and spoke to them smilingly.

42. "O friends ! Do you remember us who in order to serve the cause of our relatives have left Vraja and who were busy, as our heart was distracted elsewhere in annihilating the party of our enemies, and hence, were out of sight and have returned after a long time.

43. As a matter of fact, it is the will of the Almighty Lord which unites or disunites beings. Do you form a low opinion about us suspecting us to be ungrateful to you (despite your consistent friendliness during our stay at Gokul)? (Our absence was an act of God. Please do not misunderstand us).

44. Like unto the wind bringing together, or dispersing clouds, blades of grass, cotton, particles of dust, the Lord—the creator unites or disunites beings created by him.

45. It is a matter of great joy and fortune that the loving devotion entertained by you for me shall lead to my Self-realization and absorption in me, for it is only loving (and constant) devotion unto me that leads people to immortality i.e. Final Liberation.

46. O beautiful damsels ! Just as the elements such as the sky, water, earth, wind and fire constitute the inside and outside, beginning and the end of all material objects, I am really the beginning and the end of all beings permeating them all from within and without.

47. In this way all these elements constitute all (gross) products and beings (and are thus in them but they are not in the Soul). The Soul abides in them as the enjoyer and thus pervades them. You, therefore, observe clearly that both these (The soul and the elements) appear in me, but I as the Supreme Perfect Brahman transcend them, all.

*Śri Śuka said* :

48. In this way, the Gopīs were initiated and instructed in the spiritual Lore by Lord Kṛṣṇa. By dint of constant contemplation on him, they destroyed the sheath of the subtle body (*jiva-kośa*) and became merged in him.

49. And they prayed : "O Lotus-navelled Lord ! May your lotus-feet worthy of being meditated upon in their hearts by masters of Yoga of unfathomable spiritual wisdom and which form as a support (or supporting plank) to get out of the well of *saṁsāra* to people who have fallen into that well, may these lotus feet ever remain manifest in our hearts even though we lead a domestic life in *Saṁsāra*.

## CHAPTER EIGHTYTHREE

*Narration of Their Marriage Episodes*
*by Kṛṣṇa's Consorts*

*Śri Śuka said* :

1. The glorious Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa who was the spiritual preceptor as well as the goal (to be attained), showered his grace on the Gopīs in that way (described in the previous Chapter). Thereupon (secondarily) he made enquiries about the welfare of Yudhiṣṭhira and all other friends and well wishers.

2. They were kindly enquired after and were duly honoured (with various presents). Their sins were destroyed at the very sight of the Lord's feet. With their minds full of joy they replied :

3. "O Lord, whence can anything inauspicious befall them who with (the goblets of) their ears, drink to their heart's content the nectar of your lotus-feet (making them forget all their griefs with its intoxicating effects)[1] the nectar which (after filling the heart of the great-souled persons and

1. *mādakatayā sarva-duḥkha-vismārakatvaṁ ca dhvanitam—VT.*

having been thoroughly enjoyed by them) flows out of the heart through their lips on some occasions (in the form of the glorification of his sportive actions). It is this nectar which rids all embodied beings of Nescience which is the root-cause of the repeated mundane existence (Lit. assuming bodies repeatedly).

4. We stand offering our salutions to *you only* (leaving all our attachment to our bodies and household properties[1]). By the effulgence of spiritual knowledge, you have shaken off (and are untouched by) the three states (of wakefulness, dream and dream-less sleep) produced by contact with the mind. Hence, you are a flood (or fathomless and limitless ocean) of blissfulness; you are the Absolute and infinite intelligence. You have assumed a (human) form through your Yogic potency for the protection of the Vedas (which were lost or whose influence disappeared) through the force of the Time-spirit. You are the ultimate goal (or abode) which the recluses of the highest order aspire to reach.

*The sage (Śuka) resumed* :

5. While people (like Yudhiṣṭhira and others) were glorifying in songs the praise of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the crest-jewel among persons of hallowing renown (or the utterance of whose names is auspicious), the ladies of Andhaka (Yādava) and Kaurava families met together and narrated to each other the stories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa which are sung all over the worlds. Please listen as I shall describe them to you.

*Draupadī asked* :

6-7*. O Rukmiṇī who are never separate from Lord Kṛṣṇa, Bhadrā, Jāmbavatī, Kausalā, Satyabhāmā, Kālindī, Śaibyā, Rohiṇī[2], Lakṣmaṇā—O consorts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, be pleased to tell us this—how did Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is the embodi-

1. *hitvā kim ātma-dhāma : ātmā śarīraṁ dhāma gṛhaṁ dehadaihika-sambandham parityajya—ŚR.*)

* 6-7 VT tries to defend the sequence in the names of Kṛṣṇa's queens but it is for metrical convenience that the seniority is not observed.

2. She was honoured like another Chief queen—ŚR.

ment of God himself, come to espouse you imitating the ways of ordinary mortals, through his own Māyā Potency.

*Rukmiṇī replied*:

8. Like a lion taking away its share (prey) from the herds of goats and sheep, the Lord carried me away, placing his foot on the heads (lit. covering with the dust of his feet the heads) of invincible warrior princes (like Jarāsandha, allies of Śiśupāla) who determined to make me over (in marriage) to Śiśupāla, stood (ready to fight) raising up their bows (and arms). May those feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the abode of Śrī (goddess of beauty and wealth), be available to me for worship, forever.

*Satyabhāmā said* :

9. In order to (disprove and) wipe out the charge (of murder of Prasena) imputed (to him) by my father whose heart was extremely grieved at the death of his brother (Prasena), the Lord vanquished Jāmbavān, the king of bears, and bringing back from him the (syamantaka) gem restored it to my father. Afraid of the consequences (of the false allegations made against Kṛṣṇa and in order to pacify him), my father offered me to him even though I was promised (to be given in marriage) to another (Akrūra).

*Jāmbavatī said* :

10. My father could not recognize him (Lord Kṛṣṇa) to be his (former) Master and deity, Rāmacandra, the husband of Sītā. He fought with him for twenty seven days. When he stood the test, my father came to know him, (to be no other than Rāmacandra). Then he (my father) took hold of his feet and offered me along with the jewel as a present. (O Draupadī) I am not very great. I am his female slave.

*Kālindī said* :

11. Having come to know that I am performing penance in the hope of (getting the privilege of) touching his feet, he approached me through his friend (Arjuna) and accepted

my hand in marriage. I am just a sweeper (a female servant) in his house.

*Bhadrā said* :

12. Attending my *svayaṁvara* and defeating my brothers and kings who offered resistance, my Lord carried me away to his capital (Dvārakā) just as a lion seizes away his share (prey) from a pack of hounds. May I have the good luck of washing the feet of him who is the abode of the goddess Śrī, in every birth.

*Satyā said* :

13. In order to put to test the prowess of the kings (who came as suitors for my hand), my father procured seven extremely mighty, energetic bulls with very sharp (pointed) horns. These bulls humiliated the pride of dauntless warriors. The Lord (however) quickly controlled them (by putting a string through their nose) and yoked them playfully as children do with lambs.

14. He won me as a prize for his prowess. He vanquished the kings who way-layed us and brought to Dvārakā me along with my maid-servants and an army of four divisions, (consisting of elephants, chariots, horses and infantry). May I ever be blest with the fortune of serving him.

*Mitravindā said* :

15. O Draupadī, my father of his own accord invited Kṛṣṇa who is my maternal cousin and as my mind was (attached to and) fixed on him, gave me in marriage to him along with my maids of honour and an *akṣauhiṇī* of army.

16. May I be blest with the opportunity of serving his feet (lit. touch of his feet) in every birth whenever I may be tossed by my Karman. That (touch of his feet) will confer on me the highest good (*Mokṣa*).

*Lakṣmaṇā said* :

17. O Queen (Draupadi)! By frequently hearing about the miraculous incarnation and deeds of the Lord as glorified by Nārada in songs and duly considering (to myself) that the

Lord is chosen as a consort by goddess Lakṣmī[1] discarding (Indra and other) guardians of the spheres,[2] I set my heart on him.

18. O chaste Lady, my father who is well known as Bṛhatsena is very affectionate to his daughter (to me). When he came to know my wish, he contrived a plan to fulfill it.

19. O queen, just as at the time of your *svayaṁvara* the device of an artificial fish was contrived with the desire of securing Arjuna (for you), in my case, the fish was covered from outside and only its reflection in water was visible.

20. Hearing of this *svayaṁvara*, thousands of kings experts in the secrets of missiles, archery and of arms and accompanied by their preceptors came from all sides to my father's capital.

21. They were received with honour by my father with due regard to their seniority in prowess and age. With their hearts set on me, they all took up the bow and the arrow kept in the assembly to hit the target.

22. Some kings who took up the bow were unable to string the bow and left it. Some (who could string the bow) could pull it upto their elbow (but were unable to fix the string on the other end) fell down struck by the bow.

23. Other warriors like the kings of Magadha (Jarāsandha) Cedi (Śiśupāla) Ambaṣṭha, Bhīma, Duryodhana and Karṇa were able to fix the string on the bow but could not know the location of the fish.

24. Arjuna became ready. He located the fish from its reflection in the water and discharged the arrow, but it just touched the fish at tangent and did not pierce through it.

25-26. When the proud kings found their pride crushed (thus humiliated), they retired to their seats. Lord Kṛṣṇa took

1. There is a pun on the following word :
*Paṁma-hastayā*— (i) By goddess Lakṣmi (ii) By me with a lotus in hand.

2. *Lokapa*— (1) Guardians of spheres like Indra.
(2) Kings on the earth.

The second interpretation is : discarding other kings, I selected him with a lotus in my hand.

up the bow, strung it easily (as in a sport), fixed an arrow on it. Looking at the reflection of the fish in water (with that arrow) he felled it on the ground. At that time the sun was at the meredian.[1]

27. Drums were sounded in the sky while shouts of victory were raised on the earth. Gods were transported with joy and sent forth showers of flowers.

28. With anklets jingling sweetly at my feet (while I moved), dressed in a (specially prepared) rich silk *Sāri* and a similar costly upper garment decorated with a wreath of flowers in my braid (of hair) and holding forth a brilliant necklace of jewels wrought in gold in my hands, I entered the arena beaming with a bashful smile.

29. Lifting up my face beautiful with thick tresses of curly hair over-hanging and the cheeks illuminated by the brilliance of the ear-rings, I looked round at the (assembled) kings with a gentle smile and side-long glances and with my heart deep in love with the Lord, I (slowly approached him and) softly placed the necklace round his neck.

30. At that time *mṛdaṅgas*, tabors, conchs, drums and kettle-drums were sounded. Dancers (both male and female) began to dance and songsters began to sing.

31. When I selected Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa (as my consort) the rival kings being overcome with lust for me, did not tolerate it, O Draupadī.

32. Placing me in the chariot drawn by (jewel-like) excellent four horses, the four-armed Lord, completely accoutered with armour, raised his Śārṅga bow and became ready to fight.

33. Dāruka (the charioteer) drove the gold plated Chariot while all the suitor-kings were merely looking on and he set out for Dvārakā with me, just as a lion proceeds (with his prey) through a pack of deer, O queen.

34. Like dogs trying to obstruct a Lion, those Kṣattriya princes, with a view to ambush him on the way, girded up their lions, raised their bows and pursued him.

1. The sun's position with *abhijit* is regarded as the auspiciousmost time conducive to achieve success in everything—ŚR.

35. With their arms, thighs and necks lopped off by the flood of arrows discharged from the Śārṅga bow, some kings fell in that fight while others withdrawing from the battle fled away from it.

36. Thereupon the Lord of Yadus (Kṛṣṇa) entered the city of Dvārakā (Kuśasthalī) which was specially decorated (for that occasion) with arches, banners and streamers which obscured (even) the sun—a city highly appreciated (for its beauty) both in the heaven and on the earth like the sun returning to his (glorious) residence Śrī Kṛṣṇa entered his Palace.

37. My father respectfully received and worshipped his friends, relatives and clansmen presenting them very costly clothes, ornaments, beds, seats and other articles.

38. Though my Lord is Perfect (and needs nothing) out of devotion, my father presented to him maid servants, all kinds of wealth, foot-soldiers, elephants, chariots, horses and very costly weapons.

39. (Abashed at her boastful description of her own marriage and to please her senior co-wives she concludes). All of us must have performed penance renouncing all attachments (in our previous life by virtue of which) we have the real privilege of being maid servants of our Lord who revels in his own blissful self.

*The queens (representing* 16000 *queens) said* :

40. Having killed Bhaumāsura along with his army in the battle, when the Lord came to know that Bhauma had kept in captivity the princesses of the kings vanquished by him during his expedition for the conquest of the earth, he set us free. Though he had all his desires accomplished, he was pleased to marry us who were constantly contemplating his lotus-feet which emancipate people from Saṁsāra.

41-42. O Chaste queen Draupadī ! We do not covet imperial sovereignty over the whole earth or kingdom of the celestial world or enjoyment of both the positions here and hereafter or the attainment of supernatural powers nor the exalted position of god Brahmā, *Mokṣa* (liberation from Saṁsāra) or residence in his eternal abode (known as *Salokatā*) but we love

to bear on our heads the glorious dust on the feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (the wielder of the Kaumodakī mace)—the dust which is enriched with fragrance of the Saffron paste applied to the breast of goddess Śrī.

43. We earnestly crave for the touch of the feet of the great-souled Lord who tended cows—the touch which the Gopas and Gopīs of Vraja, women of Pulindas (hill-tribes), grass and creepers longed for.

## CHAPTER EIGHTYFOUR

*Vasudeva's Sacrifice*[1]

*Śri Śuka said* :

1. Listening to the bonds of intense love (expressed in the speeches) of his queens to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Soul of the universe, Kuntī, Gāndhārī, Draupadī, Subhadrā and other queens of the royal house along with all the Gopīs so devoted to Kṛṣṇa were greatly surprised and their eyes were filled with tears of joy.

2. While they were thus engaged in conversation, men with men and women with women, there arrived a number of sages with the desire of seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

3-5. (They were as follows :) Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana (Vyāsa), the divine sage Nārada, Cyavana, Devala, Asita, Viśvāmitra, Śatānanda, Bhāradvāja, Gautama, Paraśurāma along with his disciples, the worshipful Vasiṣṭha, Gālava, Bhṛgu, Pulastya, Kaśyapa, Atri, Mārkaṇḍeya, Bṛhaspati, Dvita, Trita, Ekata, sons of god Brahmā (such as Sanaka, Sanandana and others) Aṅgiras, Agastya, Yājñavalkya and others.[2]

1. In the colophon the title of this chapter is *Description of Pilgrimage.*

2. Under 'others' VT. includes Parāśara, Maitreya, Vaiśampāyana, etc. Historically these were not contemporaries but the epic-writer credits them with inordinately long life or persons belonging to these *gotras* are implied. Biographical sketches of these have been given in the footnotes of the previous volumes of this work.

6. Beholding those sages who were universally respected, all the kings and others present there as well as Pāṇḍavas, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma immediately rose from their seats to show respect and bowed to them.

7. Śrī Kṛṣṇa along with Balarāma and all others (present there) respectfully honoured the sages with sweet words of welcome, offering them seats, water to wash their hands and feet, flowers, incense, sandal paste, etc.

8. When they were comfortably seated, the glorious Lord, whose (human) form (incarnated in this world) was for the protection of *Dharma* (Religious order or path of righteousness) addressed them, while the great assembly was silently listening to him.

*The glorious Lord (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) said* :

9. How blessed are we ! Today we have attained completely the fruit (the highest objective) of having taken birth (in this world), as we have been blessed with a visit by masters of Yoga, the sight of whom is very difficult to obtain even for gods.

10. How can men whose (even concept of) penance is poor (limited to pilgrimage to sacred places, etc.) and who look upon the (stone or metal) images as God get the rare privilege of enjoying your sight, touching your feet), conversing with you, paying personal obeisance to you, worshipping your feet, etc. ?

11. Waters in sacred places consisting of sheets of water are not the real holy waters; the images made of clay and stones are not the real gods. It is after a long course of time that they purify people. But saints like you purify instantly by their very sight.

12. If the deities presiding over the fire, sun, stars, planets, earth, water, heavens, air, speech and mind are worshipped and propitiated they cannot wipe out the sin (i.e. ignorance in spiritual matters which is the root cause of sins) but promote the notion of diversity and difference. But the service rendered to persons of spiritual wisdom, even for a short time (a *muhūrta*) eradicates it completely.

13. He is really a donkey, carrying a fodder for the cattle[1] who looks upon this stinking dead body constituted of three humours (bile, phlegm and 'air') as the soul, regards wife and other relatives related to such a body as his own, believes a material image (of clay, stones, etc.) as an object of worship, and thinks that waters (absolve from sins and hence) are purificatory, but does not entertain such notions (of being saviours from sins) towards the spiritually wise.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

14. Hearing this speech of the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa of unfailing infinite intelligence, which was very difficult to comprehend, the Brāhmaṇas got confounded and remained silent.

15. Pondering over for a long time, they realized that though he is the Supreme Controller of the universe, it is for teaching the world by his own example, that he behaved like an ordinary person (under God's control). And beaming with a smile, they addressed him.

*The sages said*:

16. We, the best ones among the knowers of Truth and the chief among the progenitors of the world, are deluded by your Māyā, (Though you are the Lord of the Universe) you keep your universal rulership concealed by your apparent human acts, showing to be controlled by God's authority. How wonderful is the behaviour of the Lord.

17. Though he is one and no activity can be attributed to him (or whose activities are not determined or ordained by his *Karmas*), he appears in many names and forms just as the earth though one has many names and forms (e.g. a pot, a pitcher and others) through her own products[2] and (though

1. *go-kharaḥ* : VC. quotes *Bṛhaspati Saṁhitā* which states : Persons, even though paid respects by kings, should be regarded as 'donkeys among brutes' (*gokharāḥ*) if they do not know the religion (*dharma*) of the glorious Lord and the secrets of *mantras*.

2. *Vācārambhaṇaṁ vikāro nāmadheyaṁ mṛttiketyeva satyam* /—*Chāndogya Up.* 6.1.4.

one) by himself he creates, protects and eats up (i.e., withdraws within himself) the universe but is not bound by any of these acts. O ! How mysterious is the working of (you) the Perfect One, whose (birth and other) acts are merely an (outward) imitation of human beings (The real you are different).

18. Even though Your Lordship is the Supreme Person (transcendental to *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa*,) from time to time, you assume the pure *sāttvika* form for the protection of your devotees, and for the chastisement and control of the wicked, and by your example, you maintain the path of the Vedas—and you are the embodiment of different castes (*varṇas*) and stages in life (*āśramas*).

19. The Veda constitutes your extremely pure heart. Through study, penance, self-control, you—the Brahman are realised there in both your manifest and unmanifest forms and your transcendental form is beyond the ken of these two.

20. O Lord Kṛṣṇa who are the Brahman yourself ! As you are known through Śāstras (and Brāhmaṇas are the repository of these *Śāstras*) it is the Brāhmaṇas who form the best shrine as a means of realizing you. Hence, you are the most prominent amongst those who patronize the Brāhmaṇas and respect them.

21. Today in meeting you who are the shelter of all saintly persons, we have achieved the real benefit of our very existence, learning, penance and ability to see, as you are the highest consummation of all blessings.

22. Salutation to you, O glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa of boundless wisdom and intelligence. You are the Supreme Soul who have shrouded your glory by your yogamāyā (yogic deluding potency).

23. These kings in the assembly and your clansmen (Vṛṣṇis) who share life and enjoyment together with you do not know that you are the Almighty God, the Time-spirit and the Supreme Soul concealed under the veil of your Māyā.

24-25. Just as a person who is asleep does not (during that stage) remember his body in his wakeful stage and looks upon all objects (he sees in the dream) as real and supposes his self in the dream which is perceptible to the mind and exists in name only, to be real, similarly, (even while awake),

a person loses his power of discrimination as his sense-activities are directed towards objects which exist in name only (and are not real) by your Māyā and his mind being deluded and bewildered, he does not realize you.

26. To-day we had the good fortune of seeking the feet of you (who are of the above description)—your feet which are the source of the sacred river Gaṅgā which absolves people of heaps of sins; which are enthroned in the heart by *yogins* whose *yogic* practices have been ripened and perfect. Those who have been able to wipe out evil proclivities or ego by means of overflowing tide of devotion have attained the highest stage of realizing you (or have secured resort in you). Hence, O Lord, be pleased to be gracious unto us your devotees."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

27. Having thus (prayed and) taken leave of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the descendant of Dāśārha, Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Yudhiṣṭhira, the sages made up their minds to return to their respective hermitages, O royal sage.

28. Seeing that the sages were departing, the far-famed Vasudeva approached them, bowed them, clasped their feet and with great self-restraint, he requested them as follows :

*Vasudeva said* :

29. Salutation to you, O sages, in whom all deities abide.[1] It behoves you to listen to my request. Be pleased to advise me by adopting which course of *karma*, one can clear one's self of all *karmas*.

*Nārada said* :

30. It is not strange or wonderful that Vasudeva, regarding Śrī Kṛṣṇa as a child, is desirous of being enlightened in spiritual knowledge and is asking us about the way of attaining to his spiritual good.

1. ŚR. quotes the following Vedic text in support of this supposition: *Yāvatīr vai devatās tāḥ sarvā veda-vidi Brāhmaṇe vasanti |*

31. In this world, over-familiarity in the case of mortals, breeds negligence or lack of reverence. Persons who live on the bank of the Gaṅgā discard the water of that very river and go to another place of sacred waters.

32. Kṛṣṇa's spiritual knowledge is not diminished by the force of Time which causes the creation and dissolution of the universe, nor by itself or by any external cause or action of *guṇas*.

33. His wisdom is unaffected by any affliction or hindrances (*kleśa*)[1] or the effect of *karmas* or flow of *guṇas*. He is the Almighty Lord, one without a second. But ordinary people regard him just like themselves[2] as he has shrouded himself under his own potencies, vital airs, etc., just as the sun is concealed by clouds, mists and eclipse, etc.

34. Then, O king, the sages, addressed Vasudeva (Ānakadundubhi) as follows while all including Acyuta and Balarāma, were hearing them.

35. "The cause of wiping out of *karmas* through performance of *karmas* has been seen (and declared) well by the good. One should devoutly propitiate and worship Viṣṇu, the Lord of sacrifices by performing sacrifice.

36. This course has been shown as the way to serenity of mind, an easy type of *Yoga* and *dharma* that brings delight to the soul, by wise sages who perceive with the eye of *śāstras*.

37. It has been regarded as the most auspicious course for householders of the twice-born castes, that they should devoutly worship the Supreme Person by sacrifices performed with pure self-earned wealth with fair means.

38. One should give up covetousness for wealth by spending it in the performance of sacrifices, and in gifts, the desire for wife and children by enjoying conjugal happiness in married life, the aspiration for celestial world and the pleasures

1. Patañjali enumerates the following *kleśas* :

Nescience (*avidyā*), feeling-of-personality or ego (*asmitā*), attachment (*rāga*), aversion (*dveṣa*) and will-to-live or fear of death (*abhiniveśa*).

2. VJ. Vasudeva being an ordinary person regards the Almighty Lord Kṛṣṇa just a common person like himself, as Kṛṣṇa has shrouded himself under his own potencies, etc.

thereof by considering that they are subject to damaging effects of Time, leaving all these (three) desires at home in one's village, the wise have proceeded to the forest for performance of penance, O Vasudeva.

39. O Lord Vasudeva, a twice-born person is born with three debts which one owes to gods, sages and manes. If one were to renounce the household life without repaying these debts by performance of sacrifice, Vedic studies and begetting sons, he is sure to fall.

40. You are now free from two debts, O highly intelligent Vasudeva, the obligations to sages and to the manes (*pitṛs*): Now discharging the debt to gods through performance of sacrifices, absolve yourself of all obligations and be a house-less recluse.

41. O Vasudeva, you have with the most intense devotion worshipped Hari, the Lord of the universe. He has become your son."

*Śri Śuka said* :

42. Hearing the words of the sages, the noble-minded Vasudeva bowed those sages with his head and beseeched them for their favour and requested them to officiate as priests for his sacrifice.

43. Those sages who were appointed with proper religious formalities, assisted the righteous-minded Vasudeva to perform a number of sacrifices in the best possible manner (or on the largest scale) in that holy place, O King Parīkṣit.

44-45. When Vasudeva was being initiated for the sacrifice, O King, members of the Vṛṣṇi clan and other kings took their bath, dressed themselves in excellent clothes, wore wreaths of lotuses and adorned themselves with ornaments. Vasudeva's queens also who had besmeared their persons with (fragrant) pigments, put on gold necklaces and clad in their best apparel, came to the sacrificial hall with offerings in their hands.

46. Musical instruments like *Mṛdaṅgas*, tabors, conchs, drums and kettle drums were sounded. Actors (male) and female dancers danced. Sūtas and Māgadhas sang the panegyrics. Sweet-voiced Gandharva ladies along with husbands presented vocal music.

47. Collyrium was applied to Vasudeva's eyes. His body was besmeared with butter. The sacrificial priests with due formalities consecrated with sprinkling water Vasudeva alongwith his eighteen queens, as the moon god was formerly consecrated in the company of his (twentyseven) consorts, in ancient times.

48. The consecrated Vasudeva who was clad in deerskin, appeared extremely splendid with his queens, all of whom were clad in silken garments and were excellently adorned with gold bangles, pearl necklaces, anklets and ear-rings.

49. Wearing silk garments and jewels, the priest, who officiated at Vasudeva's sacrifice along with the members of the sacrificial assembly, appeared splendid like the corresponding priests in Indra's sacrifice, O great king.

50. At that time, Balarāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa (the former representing the *jiva* and the latter the Almighty Lord) the rulers of living beings, accompanied with their brothers, sons and consorts shone forth with all their supreme glorious powers (*vibhūtis*).

51. In every sacrifice, by performing with due rites and formalities, the *Prākṛta*[1] and *Vaikṛta* categories of sacrifices characterised by Agnihotra, he worshipped Lord Viṣṇu who is the controller and master of the materials for the sacrifice, the knowledge of *Mantras* employed and the formal act of performing the sacrifice.

52. Then at the appropriate time as prescribed in the Śāstras, Vasudeva gave to his sacrificial priests who were already adorned with ornaments, very richly[2] adorned cows, girls and land as the sacrificial fee.

53. Having made the sacrificer's wife to perform the *Samyāja* part of the sacrifice and after the rites of *avabhṛtha* ablution, the great sages who officiated at the sacrifice followed the *Yajamāna* (the performer of sacrifice) to the pools (created

1. ŚR. : *Prākṛta Jyotiṣṭoma, Darśa, Pūrṇamāsa, Vaikṛtta*: *saura sattra* and others going under the name *Agnihotra*.

2. The v.l. *mahādhanaḥ* means 'the extremely affluent Vasudeva'. VT. takes '*Mahādhanāḥ*' as qualifying *Dakṣiṇāḥ* and interpretes, 'sacrificial fees consisting of costly jewels, gold, money, etc.'

by and known after the name) of Paraśurāma and performed the concluding bath.

54. After taking his bath, Vasudeva richly adorned himself with ornaments and distributed clothes and ornaments to bards and his queens also gave gifts. He then entertained with food, people of all castes and communities and animals down to dogs to their complete satisfaction.

55-56. With rich liberal presents, Vasudeva honoured his relatives, their wives, and children—the princes and people of Vidarbha, Kosala, Kuru, Kāśi, Kekaya and Sṛñjayas; and also the members of the sacrificial assembly and the priests; various categories of gods, men, *bhūtas*, *pitṛs* (manes) and Cāraṇas. All of them took leave of Kṛṣṇa, the abode of the goddess Śrī and praising him and the sacrifice, returned to (their respective) home.

57-58. Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his younger brother Vidura, the sons of Pṛthā, Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Kuntī and the twins (Nakula and Sahadeva), Nārada, the glorious sage Vyāsa, friends, relatives and kinsmen with their hearts softened with friendly feelings, embraced their relatives of the Yadu clan and with heart heavy with the pangs of separation, left for their own states along with other people.

59. Highly honoured with extensive rich presents by Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Ugrasena and others, Nanda who was very affectionate to them, stayed on along with the Gopas (for some time more).

60. Having thus crossed the ocean of his desire (of performing sacrifices) with such an ease, Vasudeva was greatly delighted at heart. Surrounded by his friends and well-wishers, he took Nanda by the hand and said:

*Vasudeva said* :

61. O brother Nanda ! A bond called friendly affection has been forged by the Almighty Lord. I think it is very difficult even for valiant warriors and *yogins* to snap it asunder.

62. For, the great friendliness extended by the virtuous-most persons like you to ungrateful persons like us is unsurpassed and too valuable to be repaid. Though your friendliness bears no reciprocal return, it will never be withdrawn from us.

63. We, being ourself helpless and simply incapable of doing it, did not do any good turn to you. And now our eyes being blinded by the intoxication of affluence, we do not see you even when you are before us, O brother.

64. O respectable brother, royal fortune should not come to the lot of a person who aspires after the final beatitude, for his eyesight gets blinded by it and he does not recognize his people or relatives."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

65. In this way, the heart of Vasudeva was softened with the feelings of friendliness. Remembering the warm friendship borne by Nanda to him, tears welled-up in his eyes and he wept (with tears gushing down his cheeks).

66. With a view to giving the pleasure of his company to Vasudeva and out of deep affection from Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, he postponed his departure from day to day and stayed on there for three months more, respectfully treated all the while by the Yadus.

67. During his stay, Nanda together with relatives (Gopas) and the inhabitants of Vraja (who accompanied him there) were catered to their heart's content, whatever they desired and wanted, by offering them valuable ornaments, silk cloths and other costly presents.

68. Taking with him all the valuable gifts presented to him by Vasudeva, Ugrasena, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Uddhava, Balarāma and others, he took leave of the Yādavas and returned home (with a big Yādava army to guard him during his return journey).

69*. Nanda, Gopas and Gopīs whose hearts were attached

* *VJ.'s Text adds* :

69.1. Droṇa, Bhiṣma, Karṇa, Bāhlika, Vidura and others and Dhṛtarāṣṭra, along with his sons returned to their respective homes severally.

69.2. All other kings who had come there on a holy pilgrimage (stayed there for three months at the end of which) they returned to their respective kingdoms.

69.3. And the noble-souled Pāṇḍavas and Kunti, speaking in faltering accents (as their voice was choked with tears) accompanied with all their relatives, returned to Indraprastha, taking leave of Kṛṣṇa.

and fixed on the lotus-feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa found themselves unable to retract them from there and returned to Mathurā.

70. When all the relatives departed (to their respective places), Vṛṣṇis who looked upon Kṛṣṇa as their Deity, noticed the approach of the monsoons and returned to Dvārakā.

71. On their return, they narrated to the people (who could not come to that pilgrimage) the great festival of the sacrifice performed by Vasudeva, the leader of Yadus and their meeting of friends and other incidents during the course of that pilgrimage.

## CHAPTER EIGHTYFIVE

*Restoration of his Elder Brothers by Kṛṣṇa*
From the Realm of Death

*The Son of Bādarāyaṇa (Śrī Śuka) said* :

1. On one occasion, (after their return from the sacrifice at Kurukṣetra), Balarāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa went (as usual) (to pay respects to their parents), and bowed down to Vasudeva. Vasudeva affectionately received them when they saluted his feet, and spoke to his sons as follows :—

2. Having heard the speech of the sages indicating the glorious powers of their sons and feeling a sense of confidence by their exploits, he affectionately addressed them and said.

3. O Kṛṣṇa ! Kṛṣṇa ! O great Yogin ! O eternal Saṅkarṣaṇa ! I (now) realize that both of you are the Supreme Persons (ruling over) *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa*, the direct causes of the universe.

4. You are the place (Substratum), the agent and the instrument of the universe. You are its source and its object or purpose; whenever or whatever form it assumes is yourself. As and when this universe evolves, all the causes thereof including time and manner are the Almighty Lord yourself who control both the *Prakṛti* (to be enjoyed) and *Puruṣa* (the enjoyer) and transcend them both.

5. O Supra-sensuous Lord ! Having created this universe of a diversified nature out of yourself, you enter it as its soul, the Indwelling Controller, and you, the eternal (unborn) Lord, become the active force (*Prāṇa*) and the cognitive force (*Jiva*) and maintain it.

6.* The powers with which *Prāṇa* and *Sūtra* are endowed and other forces which go to create the universe, are really the potencies of the Supreme Self, for these powers depend (for their existence on you and there is a great dissimilarity between (the nature of) *Prāṇa* and the Supreme Soul, (the former is physical or material while the latter is spiritual). The activity of *Prāṇa* and others is only apparent (the real motive force is you, just as the velocity of an arrow is not in the arrow itself but in the physical force of the man who discharged it.

7. The lovely light of the moon, the heat and glare of the fire, the brilliant splendour of the sun, the twinkling of stars and the streaks of lightning, the stability of mountains, fragrance which characterises the earth—all these special characteristics are as a matter of fact yourself only.[1]

8. The qualities of water, viz. satisfying the thirst, the life-giving effect, are yourself, O God. The waters themselves and their essential characteristics, viz. liquidity and taste are yourself. The energy of senses, the mental power (firm will-power), bodily strength, the activity of the body, the activities and the force of the wind are your qualities (though they are attributed to the wind element).

9. You are the space that is delimited by cardinal points; You are the quarters themselves and the ether with its characteristic the Subtle sound (*sphoṭa*) which is the *parā* form of speech. You are the sound *Om*, the *Paśyantī* form of speech. You are (the Madhyamā form of speech) and the articulate speech) (*Vaikharī*) which separates letter sounds and words which denote different objects.

6* The verses following these are the echoes of *Vibhūti Yoga. BG.* Ch.X.

1. *na tatra sūryo bhāti, na candra-tārakam, etc. tameva bhāntam anubhāti sarvaṁ, tasya bhāsā sarvam idaṁ vibhāti /—Kaṭha* Up. 5.15 *Śveta.* Up. 8.14. *Muṇḍaka* 2.2.10 *Śvetāśvatara*

*Also Yadādityagataṃ tejo,* etc. in *BG.*15.12.

10. You are the real sense organ, the power revealing its special objects; You are also the presiding deities of the senses and their potency. You are the cognitive and retentive faculty of the Intellect. You are the co-ordinating power of different experiences inherent in *Jīva*.

11. You are the *Tāmasa* aspect of Ego (*Ahaṁkāra*) which is the root cause of the gross elements; the *Rājasa* type (*Taijasa*) of Ego, as the cause of the sense-organs; the *Sāttvika* kind of Ego (*Vaikārika*) which creates the deities presiding over the senses and the mind (and the *Pradhāna* or *Māyā* which makes *jivas* wander in the *Saṁsāra*[1] (*or* : You are the Chief *Prakṛti*, the cause of *Mahat* and other principles and which involves the *jivas* in *Saṁsāra*.)

12. Just as the material substance (e.g. gold) is the constant factor all through its various modifications (e.g. various ornaments like bangles, armlets, etc.), you are the constant factor abiding in all these perishable objects and are not subject to modification or decay

13. The attributes of *Prakṛti* viz. *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* and their products (such as *Mahat* and other principles) have been superimposed on you, the veritable Brahman, by your Yoga Māyā (but you are untouched by them)[2].

14. These created things, therefore, do not really exist, when they are not seen as projected on you (at the time of *Pralaya*) by *Yoga Māyā*; they are non-existent. (i.e. their very existence depends on you as the substratum on which they are superimposed). You abide in them (when you create and sustain the universe). Otherwise you remain unconnected with these modifications and abide in your absolute (blissful) state.

15. Those who are ignorant of the subtle course of yours who are the soul of all, and are present in this universe or Saṁsāra, which is a constant flow of *guṇas*, (wrongly identify themselves with their bodies through their ignorance and there-

1. VR : You constitute the *Karma* which makes *jīva* experience the fruit of the balance of his *Karmas*.

2. *Mayā tatam idaṁ sarvaṁ jagad avyakta-Mūrtinā /*
*matsthāni sarva-bhutāni na cāham teṣvavasthitaḥ //*
BG 9.4

by) get enmeshed by their Karmas, and continue to whirl in the *Saṁsāra*, as a consequence of those *Karmas*.

16. (I sincerely regret that) after having attained by a lucky chance, birth here (in Bhārata Varṣa) as a man endowed with vigorous sense-organs—which is really very difficult to obtain, I remained negligent about the main object of human life (viz. Pursuit of *Mokṣa*) through the influence of your Māyā and have wasted my life, O Lord.

17. Your Lordship binds down the whole of the world with bonds of affection to the body as being my own self and relations and belongings of the body (such as sons, etc.) as they are absolutely mine.

18. I realize that both of you are not our sons but directly the controllers of *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* (The Primordial Matter and individual souls). As you have stated (at the time of your incarnation in our prison-cell), both of you have taken this descent (in human form) for the annihilation of the Kṣattriya Kings who have become a burden to the earth.

19. O friend of the afflicted! I have, therefore, now sought asylum with your lotus-feet which dispel the fear of *Saṁsāra* of those who resort to them (your feet). Absolutely enough of this craving for objects of sense-enjoyment under the influence of which I looked upon this mortal body as my soul and you who are the supreme person, as my child.

20. Indeed, you did tell both of us in the lying-in-chamber, that you are, as a matter of fact unborn (not actually born) but for the protection of the order of righteousness (ordained by you), you reveal yourself as "born" from us (formerly as Sutapas and Pṛśni, Kāśyapa and Diti, now Vasudeva and Devakī) in every Yuga. You assume various forms like the sky and discard them (though you are one), O Lord whose glory is widely sung (in *Śrutis*). Who can comprehend the wonderful Māyā (Potency) of yours, O Omnipresent Lord?

*Śrī Śuka said* :

21. Hearing such a speech from his father, the glorious Lord, the leader of Sātvatas (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) smiled. Saluting his father with all humility, he replied in sweet words.

*The Lord said* :

22. Your speech is pregnant with philosophical significance, O father, and we accept it; as thereby you have expounded to us, your sons, the whole body of Philosophic principles.

23. I, you, this elder brother Balarāma, all these inhabitants of Dvārakā and all the mobile and immobile creation should be regarded as such (*Brahman*), O the greatest of Yadus.

24. The (Supreme) Soul is really one, self-illuminating, eternal, different and distinct from the body, devoid of any attributes; it is however due to his alliance with *guṇas* created by him and in bodies of various creatures produced out of those *guṇas*, that he appears diversified (as a man, a god, etc.), visible, momentary, identical with the body and possessed of attributes.

25. Just as the elements, sky, air, fire, water and earth become diversified (as small and great, manifest, and unmanifest, etc.) according to their products, so does the soul, though one, assume different forms and becomes many, manifest or unmanifest, small or great.

*Śri Śuka said* :

26. In this way, O king Parīkṣit, Vasudeva who was thus enlightened by Kṛṣṇa became divested of the notion of diversity, remained silent and delighted at heart.

27. Devakī, the embodiment of all deities was there at this time (of conversation). She was wonderstruck, O prominentmost Kuru, to hear that her sons had brought back to life, the son of their preceptor.

28. Addressing Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Devakī, who remembered her sons killed by Kaṁsa, piteously appealed to them, with tears of grief flowing down from her eyes.

*Devakī said* :

29. O Balarāma, Delighter of hearts and of immeasurable prowess ! O Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the masters of Yoga! I recognize you both as the Lords of the progenitors of the universe and the First persons in the universe.

30. It is (traditionally) reported that both of you have been born of me for the extermination of Kings whose virtue

(or *Sāttvika* nature) is lost through the influence of the Time-spirit and who transgress the injunctions (you laid down for their behaviour) in the scriptures (*Śāstras*) and have proved to be a burden to the earth.

31. O Soul of the Universe (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) ! I resort to you for shelter to-day—you who bring about the creation , sustenance and dissolution of the Universe by your minutest part, viz. the particles of the *guṇas* (*Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas*) which are evolved out of a part of Māyā which in its own way is an evolute of a part of Puruṣa who is but a part manifestation of you.

32. Both of you, being urged by Time and desired by your preceptor Sāndīpani to bring back to life his son who died long ago, you brought back his son from the region of *Pitṛs* (manes) i.e. the abode of death, and presented him to your preceptor as a homage (and thus paid the debt of your preceptorship)

33. You should similarly fulfil my desire as both of you are the Lords of the masters of Yoga. I desire to see, brought to life, my sons who have been killed by Kaṁsa, the King of Bhojas.

*The sage Śuka said* :

34. Directed thus by their mother, O Parīkṣit, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa resorted to their Yogamāyā (Super-human Yogic potency) and entered the nether world called Suṭala.

35. Beholding both of them enter Sutala, King Bali recognised them to be the Deity, the Soul of the Universe and especially his own God (Lord Viṣṇu). His heart was overflowing with joy at their appearance. Instantaneously, he rose up from his seat and along with the members of his family, he prostrated himself before them.

36. He brought for those great-souled personages excellent seats. When they gladly occupied them, he washed their feet and sprinkled over his head as well as those of the members of the family present, that water which (as they say traditionally) purifies the world right from its creator, god Brahmā.

37. He worshipped them by offering extremely valuable cloths, ornaments, fragrant ointments, betel leaves, chauries

(waving around their faces) lamps, catering nectar-like sweet dishes and by submitting to their services his own self, his race and his wealth.

38. It is traditionally reported that Bali whose army equalled to that of Indra, the King of gods had his heart so much soaked with love for his God that he bore the Lord's feet on his head again and again. His eyes were bedimmed with tears of joy and his hair, standing on their ends. His voice being choked with emotions, he prayed in faltering accents.

*Bali Prayed* :

39. Salutations to you the Infinite (Lord Śeṣa) who are so vast (as to bear the universe on your hood). I bow to you Lord Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of eternal bliss, the creator of the world, the expounder of the Sāṅkhya and Yoga *darśanas* (or the Paths of knowledge and *Bhakti*), the Supreme Soul, nay the very *Brahman* himself.

40. Even your sight is very difficult to obtain to all beings (even to the masters of yoga). It is through your Grace that (to some) it is not so very difficult, (just as now) you of your own accord have luckily blessed us with your visit even though we are dominated by *rajas* and *tamas* by nature.

41-42. We, Daityas, Dānavas, Gandharvas, Siddhas, Vidyādharas, Cāraṇas Yakṣas Ogres (Rākṣasas), goblins (Piśācas), the leaders of evil spirits like *bhūtas* and *Pramathas* and others of our ilk, bear continuous hostility to you who are the receptacle of pure *Sattva* (unsullied by *Rajas* and *Tamas*) and the very embodiment of scriptures (*Śāstras*).

42-A *VR's Text adds* :

That some people have attained to the different types of Liberation (from *Saṁsāra* known as *Sālokya* (residence in the Deity's abode), *Sāmipya* (vicinity to the Deity), *Sārūpya* similarity in form to the Deity) and *Sātmatā* (Coalescence with the Deity) is due to the disposition of their mind, O Lotus-eyed Lord.

43. Just as by virtue of unflinching devotion to you or by inveterate enmity to you (as in regard to Śiśupāla) or by deep passion of Love for you (as in the case of Gopīs), persons

have attained so much close union with you as could not be achieved by gods who possess *Sāttvika* nature.

44. O Lord of the masters of Yoga ! Even Masters of Yoga cannot comprehend the nature and the extent or the inscrutable functions of your Yoga-Māyā. What to speak of Daityas like us ?

45. Therefore, pray be propitious unto us—Graciously help me to get out of the dark well of house-holder's life which is different from the Shelter of your lotus-feet which are sought after by persons who are free from desires. Subsisting on whatever (fruit, etc. dropped automatically from the trees) I get at the foot of trees which afford shelter to all, I shall move about alone with a serene mind or (if association with others is necessary) in the company of pious people who are friendly to all.

46. O Ruler of all *jivas* ! Be pleased to impart your command to us and absolve us of all our sins. O Lord ! For a person who abides by your command faithfully is not subject to the injunctions and interdictions of the scriptures.

*The glorious Lord said* :

47. "In the first Manvantara, sage Marīci had six sons by his wife Ūrṇā. They were the gods (in that Aeon). They laughed at god Brahmā when they saw that he was ready to cohabit with his daughter.

48. On account of that 'misdemeanour' (as god Brahmā interpreted their laughter and cursed them), they were born in the race of Asuras as the sons of Hiraṇyakaśipu and were taken away by Yogamāyā.

49. They were born as sons to Devakī and were (immediately) murdered by Kaṁsa. Even now mother Devakī is lamenting for those children and they are now here with you.

50. For soothing the grief of our mother, we shall take them from this place to her. There they will be liberated from the curse (of Brahmā) and thus freed from the fever of affliction they will return to their celestial region.

51. Smara, Udgītha, Pariṣvaṅga, Pataṅga, Kṣudrabhṛt and Ghṛṇin—all these six (sons of Marīci) shall attain to their happy state again through my grace."

52. Having explained his mission to Bali, he took charge of those sons. Worshipped by Bali, both of them returned to Dvārakā and presented her (dead but now restored) children to the mother.

53. Seeking her children (so brought back to her), Devakī had her breasts filled with milk. Hugging them and placing them on her lap, she smelt their crowns repeatedly.

54. Overwhelmed with motherly affection at the touch of her children, and being over-joyed, she suckled them: she was too much deluded by Viṣṇu's Māyā by which the whole cycle of creation continues.

55. Having sucked the nectar of her milk which was left over there after Lord Kṛṣṇa's sucking, and due to the contact of the person of Lord Nārāyaṇa, they regained their self-knowledge.

56. Bowing to Kṛṣṇa, Devakī, their father Vasudeva and Balarāma, they ascended through the ethereal region to their places while all beings were witnessing it.

57. The divine Devakī was so much flabbergasted to see the arrival and departure of her dead children that she thought it to be the illusion created by Kṛṣṇa, O king.

58. O king Parīkṣit ! Innumerable are these and such other miraculous exploits of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme soul of Infinite powers, O descendant of Bharata.

*Sūta said* :

59. He who devoutly and constantly listens to and recites to others this account of Lord Kṛṣṇa of eternal fame and glory—the account extolled by the venerable son of the sage Vyāsa which absolves the world of all sins, and which fills the ears of Lord's devotees with delight or is like ornaments to the ears of Lord's votaries, gets his mind concentrated in the Lord and attains to his region of eternal bliss.

## CHAPTER EIGHTYSIX

*Elopement of Subhadrā : The Lord's Grace on Śrutadeva*

*The King (Parikṣit) said :*

1. O Brāhmaṇa sage ! We would like to know how (my grand-father, the ever victorious) Arjuna married the sister of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, as she was my grand-mother.

*Śri Śuka narrated :*

2. While the mighty Arjuna was travelling over the earth for pilgrimage to sacred places, he arrived at Prabhāsa where he happened to hear about his maternal uncle's daughter (Subhadrā).

3. He further heard (the report) that Balarāma would like to give her in marriage to Duryodhana, while others opposed it. As he was desirous of securing her (as his wife), he disguised himself as a recluse bearing a triple staff.[1] and went to Dvārakā.

4. With a view to accomplishing his object, he stayed the months of the rainy season, at that place. He was now and then worshipped by the citizens as also by Balarāma who did not recognise him (and was unaware that he was Arjuna).

5. It is reported that one day, he was invited as a guest and brought to the palace by Balarāma, where he partook of sweet dishes served to him with devotion.

6. He espied there that youthful girl who captivated the hearts of warriors. With his eyes blooming with love, he set his heart agitated by passions, on her.

7. As soon as she saw him who was fascinating to the hearts of women, she also fell in love with him. She fixed her heart and gazed on him with smiles and bashful glances.

1. The three staffs indicate his control of mind, speech, and action. The word *daṇḍa* stands for restraint. The *Smṛtis* of *Manu* 12.10 and *Dakṣa* 7.30 declare that a man is called *tri-daṇḍī* who has restraint over speech, mind and body.

8. Brooding over her constantly, he was eager to get an opportunity to elope with her. As his mind was distracted with over-powering passion for her, he could get no peace of mind.

9. With the consent of her parents and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, that great warrior carried her away as she came out of the fort in a chariot to visit a shrine on the occasion of a great festival of gods.

10. Immediately after getting into the Chariot of Subhadrā, he took up his bow, routed all the soldiers who tried to obstruct him. Like a lion taking away his share, he carried her even as her Yādava relatives were screaming.

11. Hearing the report (of Subhadrā's elopement with Arjuna), Balarāma got enraged like an ocean on a full moon day. But he gradually calmed down when Kṛṣṇa and other well-wishers clasped his feet (and tried to pacify him).

12. Balarāma was pleased to send to the bride and bride-groom presents and marriage-gifts consisting of a big amount of money, articles of furniture, elephants, chariots, male and famale servants.

12A *VR's Text adds*:

Yādavas and Pāṇḍavas who were already relatives became very much delighted with mutual affection. Now listen to another anecdote of Kṛṣṇa's affection for two of his devotees.

*Śrī Śuka resumed:*

13. There was a great Brāhmaṇa, known by the name Śrutadeva. He felt to have accomplished all the goals in life by his unflinching single-minded devotion to Kṛṣṇa. He was serene, full of spiritual wisdom and un-attached to objects of pleasure.

14. He lived in the country of Videha, at Mithilā (its capital modern Janakpur). Though he was a householder, he carried out all his duties and responsibilities within whatever came to him without any effort.

15. Luckily, through the grace of God, he used to get just what was absolutely necessary for his bare maintenance

and nothing more. He was, however, quite contented with it and performed all his duties in the proper manner.

16. The protector (King) of that State, Bahulāśva by name, a descendant of Janaka was also free from egotism, dear Parīkṣit. Both Śrutadeva and Bahulāśva were beloved of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

17-18 Being pleased with both of them, the glorious Lord had his chariot brought by Dāruka. The almighty Lord rode the chariot and set out for the country of Videha (modern Tirhut or North Bihar) in the company of sages like Nārada, Vāmadeva, Atri, Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana Vyāsa), Paraśurāma Asita, Āruṇi, I myself (Śuka), Bṛhaspati, Kaṇva, Maitreya, Cyavana and others.

19. At every stage in that journey, citizens and villagers received him on his arrival, with articles of worship and offerings in their hands, O king, just as they would do unto the Sun rising in conjunction with planets.

20. Men and women from the countries of Ānarta, Dhanva, Kuru, Jāṅgala, Kaṅka, Matsya, Pāñcāla, Kunti, Madhu, Kekaya, Kosal and Arṇa as well as others drank with their eyes his lotus-face illumined with noble smile and affectionate looks.

21. (As he proceeded), Kṛṣṇa, the Preceptor of the three worlds, conferred insight into and knowledge of the Truth and the state of fearlessness (i.e. Liberation from Saṁsāra) on people, the blinding darkness of whose vision had been completely dispelled by his gracious glances. Hearing on the way his own glory celebrated in songs by gods and men — his world — wide spotless (pure) glory which destroys inauspiciousness and sins—He slowly and leisurely journeyed to Videha.

22. Hearing Lord Kṛṣṇa's arrival (in Videha), villagers and citizens thereof became delighted and they came forward to welcome him with presents and other offerings in their hands.

23. When they saw Lord Kṛṣṇa of hallowing renown, their countenance, and hearts (as if) bloomed with ecstasy. With their palms folded on their heads, they bowed to him

and the accompanying sages of whom they had only heard before.

24. Believing that Kṛṣṇa, the Preceptor of the world had come there to shower his grace on him personally, both the king of Mithilā as well as the Brāhmaṇa Śrutadeva prostrated themselves at the feet of the Lord.

25. With their palms folded to pay obeisance, both the king of Mithilā (Bahulāśva) and Śrutadeva simultaneously invited Kṛṣṇa along with the sages accompanying him, to accept their hospitality.

26. The Lord accepted the invitation of both of them. With the desire of pleasing them both, he (assumed two forms and) entered (severally) the houses of them both, without being perceived by the other.

27-29. When Lord Kṛṣṇa and sages, whose even names never reached the unrighteous ears, visited his house, the high-minded Bahulāśva, the descendant of the family of Janaka brought excellent seats (and offered them). When they were comfortably seated, he paid obeisance to their feet with intense devotion. His heart was transported with joy and eyes were bedimmed with tears of joy. He washed their feet and sprinkled his own head as well as those of the members of his family with that water which purified the world. He then worshipped the Lord and sages whose minds were devoted to God by means of sandal paste, flowers, cloths, ornaments, fragrant incense, lamps and offered them oblations of water, cows and bulls.

30. When they were fed with sumptuous meal to their heart's content, he joyfully placed on his lap the feet of Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa). Pressing them gently, he spoke in sweet words pleasing them all, as follows :

*The King (Bahulāśva) said*:

31. "O all-pervading Lord ! You are the in-dwelling soul (*antaryāmin*) of all beings, the witness to everything and self-illuminating. It is hence that you revealed yourselves to us who remembered your lotus-feet.

32. You have often declared that neither your brother Balarāma (the incarnation of Śeṣa), nor your consort goddess

Śrī, nor your son (God Brahmā) is as dear to you as a person who is exclusively devoted to you. It is to vindicate the veracity of your statement that your Lordship has revealed yourself to our view.

33. What person cognisant of the knowledge that you offer your own self to those serene sages who regard nothing (even their bodies) as their own (and contemplate on you) will abandon your Lotus-feet?

34. You have incarnated in the family of Yadus for putting an end to the Saṁsāra of persons who are whirling in that cycle of birth and death. And you have extended your glory which can completely wash out the sins of the three worlds.

35. I bow to you, O glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa of unlimited wisdom and intellect; you are the divine sage Nārāyaṇa who quietly perform penance (for the happiness of the world).

36. O perfect lord ! Be pleased to stay in our house along with the sages for some days and purify this family of King Nimi by the dust of your feet."

37. Thus entreatingly invited by the king, the Lord, protector of the universe stayed for some days at Mithilā, bestowing happiness and well-being on men and women of Mithilā.

38. Like Janaka (the king of Mithilā), Śrutadeva was overjoyed to find that Kṛṣṇa had arrived and stayed in his house. It is traditionally reported that he was so much transported with joy that he waved his cloth and danced.

39. Bringing mats and seats of Kuśa grass, he seated them comfortably. He warmly greeted them with words of welcome. With great joy, he and his wife washed their feet.

40. With that water, that highly blessed Brāhmaṇa sprinkled himself and all the members of his family and relations. Feeling that he had accomplished all his ambitions in life, he was transported with ecstasy.

41. He propitiated them by worshipping them with whatever articles of worship he could procure, such as fruit and other articles (e. g. sandal-paste, flowers), cool water scented with the plant *Andropogon Muricatus* (called Vāḷā in Marathi), fragrant earth (musk?), Tulasī leaves, Kuśa grass and lotus

flowers and with food conducive to the promotion of *Sāttvika* qualities.

42. He tried to reason with himself, "O ! How wonderful ! How did this association of mine who am fallen in the dark well of household life, take place with Lord Kṛṣṇa and the gods on the earth (Brāhmaṇas) who have enshrined Lord Kṛṣṇa in their hearts and the dust on whose feet has the sanctity of holy waters."

43. When the guests were offered warm hospitality and were comfortably seated, Śrutadeva, along with his wife, children and relatives waited upon them and touching the feet of Kṛṣṇa, submitted to him as follows:—

*Śrutadeva said*:

44-45. "It is not only to-day that the Supreme Person has revealed himself to our vision but (long ago) when, having created the universe with his potencies, he had his presence therein by virtue of his personal power. But he has actually revealed to our vision to-day. Just as a man in the state of sleep mentally creates another dream world, world of his own through the influence of *Avidyā* on his mind (or by the force of your Māyā) and entering into that dream-world appears as objective reality.

46. You always shine in the hearts of those pure-minded persons who constantly listen to and speak about your glories: who always adore you and pay obeisance to you and converse with each other about you. (But it is my great fortune that you have manifested yourself within the range of my sight).

47. Even though you abide in the hearts of those whose minds are distracted by their Karmas, you are very far away from them and you cannot be comprehended by their mental powers such as Egotism (*Ahaṅkāra*). But you are quite nearest to those who have developed spiritual qualities by listening to and singing of your glories, contemplating on you, etc.

48*. Salutation to you who reveal yourself as the Supreme Soul (and confer liberation from Saṁsāra) to those who

48* (1) VR : Salutation to you who dispense both bondage and liberation from Saṁsāra. Those who know the Supreme Soul as he is, attain to

know the (real nature of the) Soul as different from the body (and thus do not identify their body with their Soul) and who have allotted Saṁsāra (the cycle of births and deaths) to those who wrongly identify the body with the soul (and are thus separated from you). You control both the principles like *Mahat*, etc. which are the evolutes of *Prakṛti* and are thus 'caused' or products and the *Prakṛti* itself which is uncaused, but to both of these the *jīva* is subject (and hence he whirls in the *Saṁsāra*). By the force of your Māyā potency the vision of others is screened but yours is ever unobstructed.

49. As you are the Almighty Lord, be pleased to command us, your servants, what services we should render to you Your very revelation to the view of men instantaneously puts an end to all their sufferings."

*Śri Śuka said*:

50. They say that when the Lord heard Śrutadeva's appeal (as presented by him), the glorious Lord who annihilates all the agonies of those who bow and thus submit themselves to him humbly, took him by the hand and similingly spoke to Śrutadeva:

him. According to your will you ordain death to those who have not given their mind to you. You assume an incarnation for conferring grace on *Jīvas* and not do so due to the force of Karmas. You are not partial in not bestowing Liberation from Saṁsāra on those whose vision is clouded by your Māyā and do not realize you properly.

(ii) V.] : It is beyond my capacity to propitiate you except by offering salutation to you who bestow all *Puruṣārthas* (desired objectives in human life) on those who comprehend the Paramātman correctly. You are all-pervading. You take up various forms according to your will. You pervade the gross universe which is the product (or evolute of Prakṛti) and also the subtle causeless i.e. eternal *Prakṛti*. It is due to your infinite Potency that your vision i.e. knowledge is always unobstructed.

(iii) VT : It is due to your grace that we came together and I could see you. For those who realize you, it is your *Śrī-Vigraha* (original form of God) which removes the fear of death. You control this transient world (which is a product) and your own region which is eternal. By the force of your Māyā the vision of those interested in this world is clouded but not of those who are related to your region.

*The Lord said*:

51. O Brāhmaṇa Śrutadeva ! Please note that these sages who move with me purifying the people with the dust on their feet, have come here with the intention of conferring their grace on you.

52. Gods, sacred places and holy waters gradually purify people by their sight, contact and worship after a long period of time. But that is instantaneously accomplished just by the sight of these most exalted souls (the Brāhmaṇas—).

53. A Brāhmaṇa, by his very birth, is superior to all other beings. What needs be said of a Brāhmaṇa who is endowed with penance, learning, contentedness and devotion to me?

54. Even this Personality of mind endowed with four arms is not dearer to me than a Brāhmaṇa. A learned Brāhmaṇa is the very embodiment of Vedas while I, of gods. A proof (*Pramāṇa*) is Superior to what is to be proved (*Prameya*) as it depends on *Pramāṇa*. As Vedas are *Pramāṇa* and gods, the *Prameya*, the Superiority of the Vedas (and consequently of Brāhmaṇas) is automatically obvious.

55. Persons of evil mentality do not understand this truth. Out of jealousy they disregard their preceptor, me, Brāhmaṇas who are my ownself and entertain reverential attitudes to idols (and symbols, etc.) as adorable objects.

56. Perceiving me as the All-pervading Ātman everywhere, a Brāhmaṇa cherishes the idea that this universe consisting of mobile and immobile creation and the principles such as *Mahat* and others which constitute the universe, are nothing but my forms.

57. Therefore, O Brāhmaṇa Śrutadeva, worship these Brāhmaṇa sages with the same devotion and faith as you have in me. If this is done, I am directly worshipped but not by any other means even if it involves considerable expenditure of wealth and show of grandeur.

*Śri Śuka said*:

58. Thus commanded by the Lord, he worshipped Kṛṣṇa and those excellent Brāhmaṇa sages as being the same (as one Ātman) with the same devotion and attained the goal of saints

(*Mokṣa*). Even king Bahulāsva of Mithilā also attained the same state.

59. O king Parīkṣit ! The glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa who is devoted to his votaries stayed with his two devotees. Having enlightened them in the true path to *Mokṣa* as enunciated in the Vedas, he returned to Dvārakā.

## CHAPTER EIGHTYSEVEN

### *Śruti Gitā*

(Hyman of Praise by The Vedas)

*Parikṣit requested*:[1]

1. O Brāhmaṇa sage ! How is it possible for the Vedas, conditioned as they are with *guṇas*[2] and their products, to carry out their function directly with reference to the Supreme Brahman which is beyond specific indication and hence indefinable, devoid of *guṇas* and (beyond the range of perceptibility) is transcendental to the causal (cause-effect) relation.

1. Referring to the concluding verse of the last chapter—86.59—Parīkṣit doubted the competence and capability of the Vedas to declare or describe the Supreme Brahman.

2. ŚR explains : The Śruti texts are expressed in and consist of words. Words are characterised by their 'powers' technically known as *Mukhyā*, *Lakṣaṇā* and *Gauṇī*, or by their power by which it expresses, indicates or suggests the implication either by means of (i) *abhidhā* (denotation, the meaning belonging to the word by social consensus or convention (*Saṅketa*) which primarily made the word at all), (ii) *Lakṣaṇā* (the secondary signification. The standard SK. example is *Gaṅgāyām ghoṣaḥ*—'The cowherd colony is in or on the Gaṅgā'. Here *in* or *on* means not on the water-current of the river but on the bank of the river (technically called *Jahallakṣaṇā*). Or *Kuntāḥ Praviśanti* "spears enter" i.e. 'persons bearing the spears enter'. Something additional to the thing mentioned viz. spear-bearers is implied. *This is called a-Jahal-Lakṣaṇā*. The 3rd power of the word is *Vyañjanā*—'suggested or insinuated sense.' Thus if a cool breeze is implied by saying 'the cowherd colony is on the Gaṅgā', it will be *Vyañjanā*.

KD has explained in details ŚR's commentary adding his illustrations to elucidate it. Thus he gives the sub-division of *abhidhā* viz. *rūḍhi*, *yoga* and

*Śri Śuka explains*:

2. The Almighty who is above limiting conditions and ever-liberated evolved the intellect, the senses, the mind and the vital breaths of all embodied beings (*Jīvas*) for the enjoyment of various objects, for bringing about their birth, for their transmigration to various other-worldly regions, for experiencing pleasures, etc. thereof and for their Final Liberation (where all speculation or ideation ceases to function). He created these for helping *Jīvas* attain their four objectives of life, viz. *artha, dharma, Kāma and Mokṣa.*

*yoga-rūḍhi*. Thus names of persons Rāma, John, etc. are by social convention (*rūḍhi*) but *nṛpati*. 'The protector of the people' 'a king' is etymological (*Yoga* or *Yaugika*). But *Pāṅka-ja* (born out of mud) may mean a lotus or a frog but is by *convention and etymology* used for a lotus flower. This is *Yoga-rūḍha*.

The thrust of Parīkṣit's submission is "How can Brahman which is transcendental to *Padārtha* can come with the range of words of Śruti.

As ŚR. succinctly states it : *evam padārthatvāyogād apadārthasya ca vākyārthatvāyogān na śruti-gocaratvam Brahmanaḥ* /

The position taken by other important annotators may be briefly summarised as follows :—

VR : The Supreme Brahman is indefinable either as a *cit* (conscious) or *acit* (unconscious, material) entity. It is beyond three *guṇas*. It is absolutely different and distinct from other intelligent or unintelligent existence. How could the *Śrutis* being verbal in nature, denote or describe *Brahman* directly.

VJ : The Supreme Brahman is indefinable, void of *guṇaś*, distinct from *Sat* and *asat* (The causal matter and its product). While Śrutis are words and as such can connote qualities or denote things having qualities. This being the case how could Śrutis speak of the Supreme Brahman? Did they directly describe it or indicate its properties ?

By Suka's epithet—*Brahman*—VJ takes 'a sage whose all desires are accomplished.'

KD : Śuka concedes that when after the withdrawal of the universe, the *Prakṛti* ceases to be and there exists only formless, attribute less Brahman, this Brahman is beyond the power of Śrutis to decribe. But when the universe is created and the individual souls (*Jīvas*) which lay dormant or dissolved in the *Prakṛti* are granted their subtle-bodies (*liṅga Śarīra*) and are given scope to achieve their purpose in life, be it *dharma, artha, kāma*, or *mokṣa*, God is the Controller of Māyā and is hence called the Almighty Lord (*Prabhu*). To such *Jīvas*, *Śrutis* describe *That* (*Brahman*) *thou* (*art*) etc. But when the power of words ceases to be and the Śrutis find it beyond

3. This is the secret essence about the Brahman which is enshrined in the *Upaniṣads* and which is treasured up in their mind by the ancestors of our ancestors[1] (like Sanaka, Sanandana, etc.). He who faithfully and with devotion preserves it in the mind becomes rid of the limitation of the body[2] etc. and attains the *Summum bonum*.[3]

their capacity to speak about Brahman, they assume silence which is an eloquent guidanec (87.60-112).

VR: The controller of the universe invested the *Jīvas* (individual souls) with their bodies for favouring them with the opportunity of propitiating him as well as attaining their prosperity here and attainment of *Mokṣa* or *niḥśreyas* hereafter, and for gaining the knowledge of the self which leads to *mukti* (Final Emancipation), and removing the notion of difference about their essential nature. VR : alternately explains *Kalpanāya* as "for the sake of the sportive activities regarding the creation, etc. of the universe."

VJ : The Lord has created the intellect, the senses, the mind and the vital breath for *Jīvas* so that words (*mātrās*) indicate him directly that he is distinct from *Sat* and *asat* (or subtle and gross *Prakṛtis*) and in order that they should take to meritorious activities (*bhavārtham*) such as *svādhyāya* and *Pravacana*. The 'words' do not indicate attainment of heaven but obtaining merits for realization of the Supreme Self. VJ interpreres *Kalpanāya* as "for knowledge of the Supreme Self's (*Paramārtha jñānāya*).

VT : The Lord has created the intellect, the sense-organs, the minds and the vital breaths of various categories of *jīvas* like the human beings who were lying dormant or in a dissolved state along with the *Prakṛti* after the great *Pralaya* (dissolution of the universe) for the sake of understanding the Vedas and thereby to make them realize their Self (the principle of *jīva*) and for visualizing the Supreme Self (the *bhāgavat-tattva*) called here as *akalpana* (that which is devoid of *māyā*).

VB : The logically established view (*Siddhānta*) is that Brahman should be regarded of that nature as it is described in *Upaniṣads* (*Vedānta*). In the evolution of the world, the Lord created (1) Intelligence, (2) Sense-organs, (3) the mind and (4) vital breaths (*Prāṇas*) in this serial order and their respective function is (1) *mātrā* (2) another transmigration of the soul (3) for *ātman* and (4) *akalpana*. He insists that this order of the objects of Intelligence, etc. should be observed.

*Sa kramo'trāpi grāhya evaṁ sarvopayogārtham, yato Bhagavāṁścatuṣṭayam utpāditavān, anenaiva sarvānupapattiḥ parihartavyā—iti Śukahṛdayam |*

1. *Pūrveṣām purvajaiḥ* : (1) By Vāmadeva, Prahlāda and others—VR (ii) By God and others—VJ.

2. *akiñcana*—A person who regards nothing as worth praying for or worth attaining—VR.

3. *Kṣemaṁ gacchet*—Getting all his doubts resolved by pondering over the *Upaniṣads* should attain to the Lord.

4. Here, on this topic, I shall narrate to you in details an ancient legend concerning the great sage Nārāyaṇa and containing a dialogue between Nārada and the sage Nārāyaṇa.

5. On one occasion, during the course of his tour of the world, Nārada, the beloved of the Lord, went to the hermitage of Nārāyaṇa (i.e. Badarikāśrama), to visit that ancient sage.

6. It is reported that in this Bhārata varṣa, from the beginning of the Kalpa, the sage Nārāyaṇa has been engaged in performing penance coupled with righteousness, spiritual knowledge, self-control and mental tranquility for the prosperity of the people here and their spiritual good hereafter.

7. Nārada paid obeisance to Nārāyaṇa who was seated in his hermitage surrounded by sages, residents of the village called Kalāpa, and put him this very question, O scion of the Kuru family.

8. In reply to him, the glorious sage Nārāyaṇa, in the midst of the sages who were listening, told Nārada, the gist of the discussion on the *para Brahman*, which took place between the residents of Janaloka.[1]

*The Venerable Lord (Nārāyaṇa) said*:

9. O son of the Self-born god Brahmā, in the days of yore in Jana-loka, there was held a seminar on the *para Brahman* (i. e. it was a discussion in which participants both listened and spoke and thus shared their views and experiences about the nature of the *para Brahman* with others) among the mind-born sons of Brahmā who were sages observing life-long celibacy.

10. When you had been away to Śveta-dvīpa to see the the Aniruddha form of mine, a thorough and well-rounded discussion on the *para Brahman* took place—a discussion in which all the Śrutis were discussed, co-ordinated and synthesized. In that seminar this was definitely the very question you put to me.

1. This is fifth of the seven divisions of the universe and is situated above *Maharloka*.

11. Although they (The mind-born sons of Brahmā) were all equal in status from the point of learning, austere penance, virtuousness and so much unparalleled in abounding grace that to them friends, enemies and the indifferent ones were equal. They made one of them, viz. Sanandana as the expounder[1] while others became eager listeners.

11A *VR adds*:

I shall explain to you all your queries, O sinless one. Now listen to me.

*Sanandana said*:

12-13. After swallowing up (at the time of the *Pralaya*) all the universe created by him, the Supreme person along with all his (creative and protective) potencies (such as *prakṛti puruṣa, kāla*) was as if lying asleep (in his yogic trance). At the end of the period of Pralaya, Śrutis (i. e. the deities presiding over them which were created by his first exhalations at the beginning of the creation of the universe), awakened that Supreme person singing the hymns which appropriately described his true nature, just as bards and attendants of an emperor approach to wait upon him early in the morning while he is still asleep, and awaken him by singing sweet songs eulogising his famous heroic exploits.

*Śrutis said* :

14*. Be gracious to manifest your glorious exalted nature O invincible Lord. Be pleased to exterminate the beginningless

1. KD : This was a *Brahma-Makha* "sacrifice in the form of spiritual discussion." Just as in sacrifices. though the sacrificial priests know the whole of the Veda, the priests recite only that much portion of the Veda appropriate for the rite and that too pertaining to the part of the duty (*Kṣaṇa*) assigned to them, similarly, in this *Brahma-makha* although all of them were equal in all respects, they gave the *Kṣaṇa* of 'speakership' to Sanandana.

14* The gist of VR's lengthy explanation :

O invincible Lord, be pleased to free all beings from *Avidyā*, as you, being merciful by nature, take cognisance of only the good qualities ignoring the defects or evil qualities in beings (*Sā'parādha-janeṣvapi Kaścid guṇa-leśo'sti cet tam apekṣyā' nugrahaśīlas tvam* /). Avidyā, by the three *guṇas* causes the *jīvas* to whirl in *Saṁsāra* investing them with evil. You are all powerful and are endowed with six excellences (as enumerated in the *Viṣṇu P.*) implied in

*Avidyā* (Nescience) of all those beings which are vested with mobile and immobile bodies, as the *guṇas* (like *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) possessed by Avidyā are exhibited with the evil object (of obscuring the ever-blissful nature of the Soul). You are, by your very nature, endowed with all the powers, blissfulness and authority (and hence you have kept *Māyā* or *Avidyā* under control.) O Lord ! who as their indwelling controller evoke all the powers in all beings ! It is only the Veda which can describe you to some extent as (some times—such as at the beginning of creation) you (appeared to) work by way of sport in conjunction with Māyā but as a matter of fact you always abide in your ever blissful state of infinite knowledge and delight.

your epithet *Bhagavān*. You invest all powers in mobile and immobile corporeal beings. At the time of gross creation, when you work in association with *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa*, Vedas can describe you.

VR : Concludes his Commentary stating his *Viśiṣṭādvaita* stance, as follows :—

*anena Prakṛti - sambandha-mocakatva - niyata - tatsambandhāpādakatva - jñāpanāya sarva - kāraṇatvaṁ tasya nirvikāre' "nupa-pannatvāttasmin cid - acid - vaiśiṣṭyaṁ viśiṣṭa - kāraṇatvādeva viśiṣṭa - kāryāṇām viśiṣṭa -kāraṇānyatvāt śarīrātmabhāvācca kārya-sarīra. bhūta - cid-acid-vāci-śabdānāṁ viśesyātma - paryantābhidhāyakatvāc co'ktam*

14-1. ŚR quotes the following Śruti (i.e. *Upaniṣadic*) texts attributing creation to the Supreme Person

(1) *Yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante / yena jātāni jīvanti / yat prayantyabhisaṁviśanti / tad vijijñāsasva—Taitt. Up.* 3.1.

Here creation, subsistence and dissolutions of all *bhūtas* is attributed to Brahman.

(2) *Yo Brahmāṇaṁ vidadhāti pūrvaṁ yo vai vedāṁśca prahiṇoti tasmai / taṁ ha devātma-buddhi-prakāśam mumukṣur vai śaraṇam ahaṁ prapadye—Śvetāśvatara Up.* 6.18).

Here god Brahmā's creation and his trustee-ship of the Vedas by the Supreme Man is mentioned.

(3) *Satyaṁ jñānam anantam Brahma /*
*Yaḥ sarvajñaḥ sa sarva-vit / Taittirīya Up.* 2,1r

The infinite knowledge and omniscience of the Reality is stated.

(4) *Ya ātmani tiṣṭhan ātmānam niyamayati /*

God's being the inner controller is described.

*VJ* : (*The gist only*) :

Be pleased to manifest your glory by being compassionate to your votaries. O invincible Lord ! Remove the screen to your will-power and do away with the cover of *Prakṛti* which obscures Jiva's qualities under the

15* The sages recognize that the universe that is perceived is the perfect *Brahman* (yourself) as it is the Reality (*Brahman*) that remains in the end (at the time of *Pralaya*). The *Brahman* is not

sufferings in *Saṁsāra*. Due to *Prakṛti* the inner qualities like infinite power, of Jīva which is your reflection, do not shine. You invest all beings such as Śrī, Brahmā, and others in this universe when you are associated with *Prakṛti* (which according to *Smṛtis* is one-eighth of the time of the dissolved state). The Vedas can follow you i.e. your commands and interdictions while during the stage of *Pralaya*, the Śrutis remain as mere hymns of your praise. VJ ends his com. with a quotation from Madhva Ācārya which affirms the equivalence of the Bh. P. with Śrutis.

15* (1) As *Pūrvapakṣa* ŚR quotes ṚV 8.44.16a. (which is repeated in all the Vedas e.g. *Tait. Saṃ.* 1.55.1a, *Vāj. Sam.* 3.12*a*) and states that the Śrutis refer to Agni and Indra and not to me (*Para Brahman*). The *uttara pakṣa* (the reply) is given in this verse.

(2) *KD closely follows SS.*

(3) *Sudarśana Sūri and VR* :

When all the things evolved out of *Brahman* at the time of creation are withdrawn at the time of *Pralaya* and only *Brahman* (the cause of all things) remains. Just as earthen wares are created out of and ultimately reduced to the earth (their material cause), the gross perceptible universe is said to be *Brahman* from which the universe and all things included in it are created and of which they are constituted and within which they are withdrawn. Hence, the knowers (the seers of the Vedas) have devoted their mind and speech to you (who are the firm support). The foot-steps resting on bed-steads are as good as placed on the ground as the bedsteads have the earth (floor) as their support.

15*A. *VJ's Text reads the 1st half differently* :

You are beyond the eternal darkness called *Mūlaprakṛti*. It is through Vedas that your real nature is known. You are not subject to modifications. Hence, sages i.e. learned persons like Brahmā and others resigned their thoughts, words and actions to you. Just as the feet of men resting on the firm earth get full support and do not fall, the thoughts, words and actions of these sages do not prove untrue as you, to whom they have dedicated them, are the Supreme-most.

15* *VB* (*Summary*) :

The universe itself is *Brahman*—Śrutis and experience support this. When all modifications cease to be, *Brahman* remains. VB quotes *Yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante, etc.* (*Tait. Up.* 3.1.1). Just as earthen wares are made out of and ultimately reduced to earth, so it is *Brahman* out of which everything is evolved, and the reality that remains is *Brahman*. Hence, the seers of the Vedas have made you the centre of their thought, word and deed. Even misapprehensions are also intrinsically *Brahman* (*Bhramād api svī-kṛto Viṣayaḥ paramārthataḥ bhagavān eva bhavati* /) Just as foot-step placed anywhere rests in the ultimate analysis, on the earth.

subject to modifications. It is from the *Brahman* that the rising and setting i. e. evolution and dissolution of the universe of modifications take place, just as the clay (the material cause) remains constant though its modifications (the earthen-ware like pot, pitchers, etc.) are made and unmade. Hence, sages have concentrated their mind and speech on you and not on the modifications (things in the world). How can the feet placed by men (on stones, bricks etc.) not be regarded ultimately as rested on the *terra firma* itself. (Similarly, if *Śrutis* describe some modifications of yours, they ultimately describe you who form the basis, the substratum of them all).

16*. It is, hence, O Lord of Māyā (constituted of the three *guṇas* viz. (*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*) that spiritually wise and thoughtful people immerse themselves into the nectarian sea of your stories which completely wash off the dirt (sins or impurities) of the entire world and have rid themselves of sins and (all types of) afflictions.[1] Need it be said, O Supreme Lord, that those who, by virtue of their self-realization, have cleansed all passions and evil propensities from their heart and have warded off the effects of Time (such as old age) will enjoy your state of eternal, infinite bliss ?

17*. Persons are alive (lit. bearers of life) in the real sense of the term only if they are your devoted followers, otherwise they are merely respiring bellows. It is due to your grace (i.e.

16* VJ : O Lord of three worlds ! Persons deeply learned in philosophy (*darśanas*) take a plunge in the sea of nectar of your stories which wash off the impurities of all people, have rid themselves of all the miseries of the world. Need it be said, O Supreme Lord, that the Liberated Souls whose afflictions from their hearts and the effects like birth, old age etc. caused by Time are wiped out by God himself and who resort to and worship you will enjoy the state of eternal, infinite bliss, have not to undergo any sufferings.

1. *ŚR quotes as an authority .*

*Yathā puṣkara-palāśa āpo na śliṣyanta evam evaṁ-vidi pāpaṁ karma śliṣyate*

*Chāndogya Up.* 4.14.3.

17* VJ : It is by your entry into Brahmā, Rudra and other presiding deities of *Mahat*, *Ahaṅkāra* and other principles that they could create this Egg of the universe. Those who bore ill feeling towards you (*asuhṛdaḥ*) believe that everything is unreal. And their life is nothing but respiring like bellows and their exhalations are sighs expressive of their suffering in hell. The three

presence or interpenetration) that (insentient) Principles like *Mahat* (cosmic intelligence), Ahaṁkāra (cosmic 'I'-ness') and others could create this egg of the universe or body (macrocosm as well as microcosm). You are that Supreme Being that enter into and animate the five vestures of the body enshrining the soul (the virtues consisting of food, vital breath, mind *Vijñāna* and bliss) and assuming their form, he knows them all. But factually you are not connected with them and abide in the last (called *Brahma-puccha*[1] in *Tait. Up.* (2. 1. 5). You are distinct from the gross and the subtle—the ultimate eternal Reality which alone remains after the destruction of all others.

18*. Out of those paths (of Brahma-realization explored and laid down) by (ancient) sages[2], those whose eyes are blinded by gravel or *rajas* i. e. have gross outlook, contemplate Brahman as being at the abdomen (as presiding over the plexus called *Maṇipūra*, located at the navel). Followers of Āruṇi who have subtler vision contemplate Brahman in the cavity of the heart (at the plexus or nerve centre known as *Anāhata Cakra*). O infinite Lord, the meditator thence proceeds upward (by the channel or path called *Suṣumṇā*) upto the crown of the head (to the plexus called sahasrāra the exalted position of the lustre of Brahman[3]. He who reaches this position does not recede to fall again into the jaws of death.

categories the lowest i.e. human beings, middle i.e. sages and Gandharvas, the highest i.e. Indra and other gods and their leader god Brahmā knows and disseminates by his teaching the knowledge of your eternal, infinite, unparalleled blissful nature and your being transcendental to *Sat* and *Asat* (*sad-asataḥ Paraṃ*). He is eligible to attain to a form similar to the Lord.

1. VR : has stoutly opposed the idea of *Brahmapuccha*. According to VR. : this verse emphasizes that the human life is useless if not devoted to the Lord. Persons who, though endowed with sound sense organs, indulge in enjoying objects of senses instead of engaging themselves in propitiating the Lord merely live and breathe like bellows.

2 VR : 1. *ṛṣi - vartamasu*—The paths of worship as prescribed in the Vedānta—VR.

3. *Paramaṁ dhāma*—The highest position is the centre between the eyebrows.

VR : classifies these worshippers as follows :—

(i) *Vaiśvānara-vidyā-niṣṭha* : Those who look upon gastral fire as a form of *Brahman*.

19*. You enter the various living species evolved by you, though as their (material) cause, you were already existing there. Of your own accord, you assume those forms like fire (lying dormant in the fuel and appearing similar to the size and shape of the fire-wood though as Fire it is undifferentiated one) and appear smaller or greater, higher or lower. Hence, persons whose judgment is clear and who do not expect any return (either here or hereafter) for their acts realize your true nature as being the only Reality, Pure, undifferentiated immutable in all these unreal forms.[1]

20. (The scriptures say) that the individual soul abiding in the body created and shaped by his former acts, is not limited by anything that may be termed as cause and effect. It is a part or ray of yourself who are endowed with all potencies. Having come to this conclusion regarding the nature of the individual Soul, wise men in this world, with unflinching faith and devotion, contemplate on your feet to which all righteous acts prescribed in the Vedas are dedicated and in consequence of which they attain to liberation from *Saṁsāra* (lit. State of getting no rebirth again).

(2) *Dahara—vidyā-niṣṭha*—Followers of Aruṇi who look upon God as being in the cavity of the heart (*hṛdaya-puṇḍarīkāntargatā'kāśarūpaṁ tvāṁ upāsate*)

(3) Those who follow the *parisara paddhati* i.e. the path of *suṣumṇā*.

(ii) 18* VJ : also classifies the contemplatists on Brahman as follows:—

(1) Possessors of subtle insight (*Kūrpadṛśaḥ Sūkṣma dṛṣṭayaḥ*) into Brahman and his attributes contemplate Brahman as *Udara* (*udarapūrṇam Brahman*) or Perfect, full, infinite, Brahman.

(2) Followers of Aruṇi meditate upon *Brahman* as *hṛdaya* (one abiding in the heart).

(3) The followers of the sage Maṇḍūka contemplate *Brahman* as *dahara* i.e. subtler than the sky and our vital breath lead to It. But those who follow the *Parisara* method and contemplate Brahman as passing from the heart through *Brahmanāḍī* to the crown of the head such meditators do not fall a victim to kṛtānta—God of death.

19* VJ (Only the difference is noted) quotes *Tantra Bhāgavata* as his authority. In the innumerable living species you are like *jīva* in them and assimilate yourself with those beings like fire in fire-wood. The Vital breath knows you. Great persons mentally go near you who are the eternal principle in the decaying forms and contemplate on you.

1. *Śvet Up.* 6.11.

21*. O controller of the universe ! You have assumed a corporeal form for shedding light on the true nature of the self which is difficult to comprehend. Those persons who have recouped from their exhaustion (caused by whirling in the cycle of *Saṁsāra*) by immersing themselves in the ocean of the nectarine stories of your glorious deeds and have renounced their homes (relatives, property, etc.) through their association with your swan-like votaries who take shelter in your lotus-feet, do not covet even for liberation from *Saṁsāra*.

22*. When the nest[1] (in the form of the body in which the soul dwells) follows the path that leads to you, it is useful as one's own self, well-wisher and a beloved person. Though you are always ready to help and are thus favourably disposed and the real well-wisher and loving, it is unfortunate that people of suicidal mentality do not take any delight or interest in you and do not worship you with some form of devotion. They wrong-

21* *KD* : gives a gist of this and states that the quality between God and the votary is synthesized into one-ness by intense devotion and exhorts to renounce the *Karmas*-religious rites prescribed by the Veda and engage oneself completely in the devotion to God.

(ii) *VJ* : O Lord whose essential nature is extremely incomprehensible those who have deeply studied the Vedas who have exhausted themselves in churning the extensively vast ocean of your glorious deeds and have been thereby released from *Saṁsāra*, have come to realize that you are the source of the Vedas and the "fruit" to be conveyed by them, and worship you by performance of sacrifices and meditation.

22* (1) *VR. construes differently* :

(i) If this nest i.e. the physical body is placed in your way (by devoting to your worship, etc.) you are just like the very soul, a well-wisher and a beloved person always ready to help.

(ii) KD : Poetically illustrates how a person forgets the Lord and engages himself into *Saṁsāra* and finally comes to grief. Hence, one should be absorbed in the devotion and worship of Ātman.

1. *Kulāya*—that which dissolves into the earth i.e. this physical body.

(iii) *VJ reads differently.*

Through the association of and for worshipping *sannyāsins* or Swan-like ascetics who are attached to your lotus-feet, some have renounced their houses, kith & kin and do not aspire to attain *Mokṣa* (liberation from *Saṁsāra*) which is the fruit of propitiating you, O Lord. They are devoted to you who are the most beloved one. They look upon this transient nest (This physical body) as good and dear and a selfless relative who guides by the path leading to you.

ly entertain attachment, etc. to the physical body which is so wretched and wander in this *Saṁsāra* which is extremely fearful.

23*. That state of yours which sages, the practitioners of rigorous Yogic path, contemplated in their hearts by restraining their vital breath, the mind and senses thoroughly, is also attained by your adversaries by constantly thinking of you, and also by the women (Gopīs of Vraja) whose hearts were enamoured of and attached to your mighty arms which were like the body of Śeṣa. The Lord of serpents, as well as we (the presiding deities of Śrutis) who realise you as equal to all and omnipresent and cling to your lotus-like feet, are the same (i.e. equal) in your eyes.

24*. Alas ! O Lord, how can one who has come into existence and passed away, at a later stage after you, can possibly presume to know you who existed anterior to all creation. It is from you that the sage (god Brahmā) was born. After Brahmā came into existence both the classes of deities (viz. (1)

23* VJ's Text combines the last two lines in verse 22 and the first two lines in verse 23 of ŚR's text. (The gist only) : Persons with wrong beliefs and course of meditation do not realise the Supreme Soul. Their minds being rooted in wrong notions suffer eternally in Hell and are invested with a condemned body from hell to hell. The enemies of sages who directed by *Mukhya Prāṇa* (Chief vital breath) know the way to *Mokṣa* and worship you as (present in) the *hṛdaya* (heart).

24* *KD* : You, being the author of the creation and dissolution of the universe, are anterior to all. Hence, you are beyond the comprehension of all. If we submit to your feet and follow the nine-fold path of devotion, you impart spiritual knowledge out of Grace. Hence, the path of devotion is the best of all. (HV Hari-Varadā) 87.488-510

(1) *VR (Summary)* :

*devagaṇā ubhaye* :—Two groups of sages : (i) Sanaka and others leading ascetic life and (ii) Marīci and others engaged in propagating species and world activity. When you withdraw even the *Śāstra* (Vedic Lore) within you and go to sleep, there is neither *Sat* (phenomenal intelligent being) nor *Asat* (phenomenal intelligent creation (the rest similar to ŚR).

(II) *VJ's Text* is a combination of the latter half of verse 23 and the first half of the present (No. 24) verse (only the gist of different interpretation is given.) You alone know your essential nature. The eternal Vedas seek the nectar of your lotus-feet but cannot properly comprehend you who are characterised by existence, consciousness and bliss. You are very kind to *Jīvas* who devoutly remember you.

*ādhyātmika*—deities presiding over sense-organs, mind and (ii) *ādhidaivika*—those presiding over the celestial world). When, withdrawing every thing within you, you go to sleep, at that time, there exists neither *Sat* (the gross phenomena) nor *Asat* (their subtle causes like *Mahat*, *Ahaṁkāra*, etc.) nor the product of these two viz. this psycho-physical organism called body, nor the velocity of Time, nor any *Śāstras* (*Śruti* texts) from which your nature can be known.[1]

25*. Those who postulate the evolution of the universe or being from non-being or the non-existent (as the Vaiśeṣika school does) or who believe in the cessation of the existent (twenty one types of miseries as *Mokṣa* or Liberation (as the *Nyāya school* does) or who posit the distinctness and plurality of Souls (as the Sāṅkhyas and Naiyāyikas, etc. do) and those who affirm that the fruit of (sacrificial and other) Karmas are real (as the followers of the Mīmāṁsā school hold)—all these propagate their misconceptions. It is due to ignorance about you (which leads persons to believe in the misconcept of diversity that the *Puruṣa* is comprised of the three *guṇas* or modifications of *Prakṛti*. It cannot exist in you as you are the embodiment of pure knowledge and absolute consciousness.[2]

1. *ko addhā veda ka iha pravocat /*
*kuta ājātā, kuta iyaṁ visṛṣṭiḥ //*
*arvāg-devā asya visarjanenā*
*thā ko veda yata ābabhūva //*—*RV* 10.129.6.

Also : *yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha /*—Tait. Up. 2.4.1

25* *KD* : elucidates ŚR's refutation of the view of Patañjali that the Brahman evolves out of *Asat* i.e. the *Jīva* attains Brahmahood though originally he did not possess it. He has incorporated the translation of the quotations from *Upaniṣads* (that are given below) into his lucid commentary.

*VR* : Only the difference from ŚR is noted as VR is a long Com. (second half) : Those who think that *Prakṛtis* of three *guṇas* and the *jīvas* (intelligent beings) are distinct and are not controlled by Supreme *Brahman* are under the influence of *Avidyā* (nescience). But you transcend *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* and yourself are Perfect, Infinite consciousness.

2. In refuting the other schools of thought the author of the Bh. P. based this verse on *Śruti* Texts like the following :—

(i) *Sad-eva somyedam agra āsīt / Chāndogya Up.* 6.2.1

(ii) *Brahmaiva san Brahmāpnoti/ - Bṛhad. Up.* 4.4.6.

26*. All the universe including the Jīva, comprised of the three *guṇas* (modifications of Prakṛti) is a projection of the mind. It appears to have a real existence as it is superimposed on you. Those who have realized the *Ātman* (the soul) regard all this (subjective and objective) universe as *Sat*, i.e. really existent as it is the projection of the Ātman Himself. Just as persons seeking gold do not discard (ornaments which are) the modifications (of gold) as they are essentially gold, the knowers of the Self come to the conclusion that this Universe (both subjective and objective) is their very self as he (the *Ātman*) made it and then entered into it.

27**. Only those persons who devotedly serve (i.e. worship) you as abiding in all beings as their Indwelling soul, disregard-

(*iii*) *avidyāyām antare vartamānāḥ /*
*svayaṁ dhīrāḥ paṇḍitam manyamānāḥ //*
*Jaghanyamānāḥ pariyanti mūḍhāḥ /*
*andhenaiva nīyamānā yathāndhāḥ //* Muṇḍaka 1.2.8.

*ŚR* was a follower of the *advaita* school of Śaṅkara. But like Śaṅkara, he was an ardent devotee at heart. After every verse of the *Śruti gītā* he composes one verse conveying the gist of that verse. At the end of his rendering in a verse the gist of this 25th verse, he expresses his ardent desire for Liberation by repeating the names of God who is both Śiva and Viṣṇu. He prays :

*Śrīman Mādhava Vāmana Trinayana Śri Śaṅkara Śrīpate /*
*Govindeti mudā' vadaṁ Madhupate muktaḥ kadā syām aham //*

26* (i) *VR* : The mind of all beings including that of a human being, constituted as it is of three *guṇas* which apparently shows to produce some effects cannot do so in your case (It cannot realize you). But your devotees who worship you and meditate upon you, purify their heart and realize that the Universe is *Sat*—a Reality as it is not different from *Paramātman* or *Brahman* —the universe, which is the effect or a synthesized whole of the subtle principles of sentient and non-sentient beings is *Brahman.*

(ii) *VJ's* : Text combines the last two lines of Verse 25 with the 1st two lines of the present verse :—To regard that the *jīva* is bound by three *guṇas* like Sattva and others is ignorance. Only the unrighteous postulate that your mind is constituted of three *guṇas*. Supra-human beings like gods with better insight, know that you transcend these *guṇas* and are an embodiment of supreme bliss and it is the *Jīvas* that suffer from miseries.

27** (I) KD : extends this devotion to the spiritual preceptors as well.

(II) VR : Out of mercy for those averse to you you control them like cattle and bring to the right path by teaching them the path of righteousness. Those who are not averse to you and are your votaries purify other ignorant persons.

ed Death and planting their foot on the head of Death attain Liberation (from the cycle of births and deaths). *But to those who turn away their face from you, howsoever, learned they be, you bind them down like beasts by your commandments (of injunctions and interdictions ordained in the *Śrutis*). Only those who cherish devoted love to you purify themselves as well as others but not those who are averse to you !

28*. Being self-illuminating as the embodiment of knowledge as you are, you control the power of the sense-organs of all beings, though you yourself are devoid of senses[1] (in your formless aspect). Hence gods who are bound by Nescience (*Avidyā*) and who partake of the offerings oblated to them by men (under their dominance) offer worship and homage to you (just as tributary princes collect revenue from their subjects and pay tribute to their overlord, the emperor). The progenitors of the world execute the duties of their offices to which they are appointed through your fear[2] just as tributary kings do unto their emperor in this world.

(III) VJ : the text is a combination of the last two lines of verse 26 and the first half of verse 27 of ŚR.

As gold is the material cause of an ornament of gold which is its modification and as such it is not discarded as separate from gold, the Lord who interpenetrated and illumined the universe after its creation has his own essential nature unchanged. The permeator of the universe is the same absolute God. Those who serve you as abiding in every principle of reality set their foot on the head of death and become Liberated.

1. (i) *a-pāṇi-pādo javano grahītā |*
*Paśyatyacakṣuḥ sa śṛṇotyakarṇaḥ ||*
*sa vetti vedyaṁ na ca tasya vettā |*
*tam āhur agryam puruṣam purāṇam ||*

—*Śvet. Up.* 3.19

28*. VR : It is by your will-power that you bring about creation, etc. of the universe. You have all the powers of the sense-organs concentrated in your hands as you are the absolute.

2. *bhīṣa'smād vātaḥ pavate, bhīṣodeti sūryaḥ | bhīṣāśmād Agnīs' cendraś ca mṛtyur dhāvati pañcamaḥ |*

—*Tait. Up.* 2.7.1.

*yathā'gneḥ kṣudrā viṣphuliṅgā vyuccarantyevam evā'smād ātmanaḥ sarve prāṇāḥ, sarve 'lokāḥ, sarve devāḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni vyuccaranti |*

*Bṛhad. Up.* 2.1.20.

29*. O Lord ! You are eternally free and far beyond the reach of Māyā. But when you are pleased to sport with that beginningless Māyā or Avidyā by your mere glance (without coming into contact with her), all the mobile and immobile beings invested with their subtle bodies come into being.[1] But their bodies depend on the causal (latent) *karmas* of those beings which have come into existence by your (above-mentioned) glance. You are beyond the ken of sense-organs and the mind. Like the sky, you are impartial—equal to all. None kindred to you, none stranger.

[From the point of subtleness and impartiality] you are comparable to the Void[2] (*śūnya* in its positive aspect), incomprehensible to speech and mind.

30.** O Eternal Lord ! If (it is postulated as Sāṅkhyas and schoolmen of similar views do, that) individual souls be infinite in number, each eternally existent and all-pervading, their being under control (of another i.e. you) is not possible.

29* (I) KD refutes 'voidness' conveyed by the term *śūnya*. *Śūnya* means 'un-manifest' 'beyond the range of word'. He discusses fundamental problems about the nature and size (whether atomic or co-terminus with the body) of the soul. He discusses the concepts of 'bondage and 'liberation', 'plurality' and 'oneness' of the soul. (The discussion is too lengthy to be compressed in a foot-note].

*asad vā idam agra āsīt | tato vai sad ajāyata |*

—*Tait. up.* 2.7.1

(II) VR: (Summary only).

All beings mobile and immobile are invested with a body through which they are made to suffer agonies caused by *Prakṛti*. Emancipation from these sufferings is possible only by the gracious glance of the Lord. All sentient (and non-sentient) beings constitute your body. As nobody can be separate and distinct from you, you are their Protector. None is equal to you. Nothing pre-existed you. You are all-pervading like the sky and are not tainted by any contact.

(III) VJ.'s text combines verse 28 c, d and 29 a, b of ŚR's text. The gist of 29 a, b : VJ. quotes with approval Śāṇḍilya's opinion. If one were to hold that Liberation (from *saṁsāra*) is secured through the gracious glance of Viṣṇu, then it must be admitted that all beings whirl into *saṁsāra* due to the will of God.

30*. VR : (only the difference from ŚR is noted).

The view that that which permeates the universe is both the ruler and the ruled, is not correct and the holders of the view have failed to see the truth.

(It is illogical to hold that equals are sub-ordinate to equals.) And, hence, (the statement) that you control them or they are controlled by you is not possible. Their being controlled is possible only if the contrary is true (i.e. if the *jīvas* be limited or conditioned, finite and non-eternal). That (i.e. you or *Brahman*) which originates or produces as an evolute anything (viz. the *jīva* in this case) and thus forms its part (as the material cause) and is thus immanent in it, can control that evolute (the *jīva*). And this controlling power is not known to them who pose to know it[1], for it, being beyond the range of words and thoughts, what they come to know is defective.

31*. To postulate the creation of the *jīva* either from the beginningless *Prakṛti* (i.e. to regard the *jīva* as a product or transformation of *Prakṛti*) or from the eternal (birthless) *Puruṣa* or from a combination of both *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* is not tenable (for *Prakṛti* is *jaḍa*—inert—while the *jīva* is the intelligent, animating principle of life and as such it cannot be created by the inert *Prakṛti*. The second and the third alternative subjects *Puruṣa* to modifications). Just as bubbles are apparently formed out of interaction of water and air, *jīvas* apparently seem to come into existence through the *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* (as the material and instrumental causes. But the *Brahman* is the only reality and) the so-called creation of *jīvas* being unreal, they, with all their several names and forms, merge in you as the rivers merge into the sea (and lose their identity) or all juices (from various flowers collected by bees) get dissolved into (what is ultimately called) honey.[1]

1. *yasyāmataṁ mataṁ tasya, mataṁ yasya na veda saḥ /*
*avijñātam avijānatām, vijñātam avijānatām //*

—*Kena Up.* 2.3

(1) VR : Just as bubbles (temporary by nature) are created by the inter-action of water and wind (which are as compared with bubbles—permanent in nature), *jīvas* are formed from the combination of *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* both of which are birthless (eternal). It is due to your support that they bear different names and forms as a god, a man, etc. At the time of *Pralaya* (dissolution of the world) they merge in you leaving their names and forms as rivers do, etc.

(II) VJ : *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* are eternal, unborn and inseparable. Jīvas come into existence conditioned with a body (like that of bubbles on water).

32*. Comprehending thoroughly that misapprehension (viz. the identification of the body with the Soul) has been implanted by your Māyā (leading to repeated births in Saṁsāra) intelligent and discerning persons cherish profound love and devotion to you who emancipate them from the cycle of births (and deaths). How can there be any fear of *Saṁsāra* to those who have resorted to you for refuge ? For your brow of three 'tyres' (i.e. Time or a year consisting of three seasons, viz. the summer, the rains and the winter) strikes terror constantly in the heart of those who do not seek asylum with you.

33. Persons who, neglecting the feet of one's spiritual preceptor, try to control the extremely restless, unbroken horse in the form of their mind, by trying to subdue the senses and controlling the breath, undergo great troubles for the means of controlling the mind, and are beset with hundreds of miseries in the *Saṁsāra*. Such persons are like merchants embarking on a voyage without securing the services of a helmsman (to pilot the boat.)

34. What (happiness) can men derive from one's kith and kin, sons, wives, wealth, houses, landed property, chariots and other vehicles—nay the very life-breath itself—when you, the very embodiment of every kind of blessing, are easily available by his side in the form of Ātman, ready to confer blessings on him who seeks asylum with you ? What thing in this *Saṁsāra* which is by its nature transient and essentially devoid of any substance, can give pleasure to a person who is ignorant of the above-mentioned truth (about your blissful nature) and endeavours to get sexual pleasure.

35**. Sages who have enthroned you on the lotus of their heart and hence the water with which their feet are washed, is

32. *VJ : How will your brows inspire fear of *Saṁsāra* in the hearts of those who completely submit themselves for your grace ?

VJ. **: Sages, gods and others who through holy scriptures realize that you alone are *Sat*, the Real, independent existence, and concentrate their heart on your lotus-feet which annihilate all sins, O Supreme Man, such persons do not even once approach the abode of Hara i.e. are not at all affected by *Ahaṁkāra* (Egotism).

It is noteworthy that VJ. specifically uses "Hara" and "Rudra" for *Ahaṁkāra*.

capable of destroying all sins, are completely free from lust and pride and they go on pilgrimage to various sacred places and holy waters on the earth. Those who have but once set their heart on you, the *Ātman*, the receptacle of everlasting bliss never again turn their mind to (the enjoyment of) the household life which robs man of his excellent virtues (like fortitude, serenity of mind, etc.)

36*. (The following is a refutation of the view of the Mīmāṁsakas regarding the reality of the world).

If you agree that as this (world) is evolved out of the Reality (*Brahman*), it must be real, (we say that) that is not the case. This (your) argument is fallacious. In some instances, no invariable concomitance is observed. (The effect does not necessarily follow the nature of the cause. e. g. A son is found different from the father.) In some cases, the so-called evolute is false (e. g. the "mis-perception" of a rope (a reality) as a serpent (which is unreal). Hence the world is not real like the (*Brahman*). If (you argue that the "mis-perception" of a serpent is caused by the presence of the rope and ignorance about the reality, similarly) the world is the product of both (*Brahman* and *Avidyā*), we reply that still the world is not real. It is superimposed on the Reality called *Brahman*. We appreciate the usefulness of this theory. The illusion theory is admitted as it explains the transactions of the phenomenal world, and such transactions are carried on by blindly following traditions. Your speech (Vedic texts promising reward for ritualistic acts such as performance of sacrifice, etc.) deludes through the manifold powers of words (such as *lakṣaṇā*, *vyañjanā*, etc.) persons who have become dullwitted by blind faith in Vedic rituals.[1]

36*. VR differs : If as you say, whatever is born of *Sat*—real existence —may not be real, you must show where this view fails and where it is totally disproved. The dull-witted followers of the path of Karma, are deluded through blind tradition.

1. : *tad yatheha karma-cito loko kṣīyate evam evā'mutra puṇya-cito lokaḥ kṣīyate |*

—*Chāndogya* Up. 8.1.6

Thus many Vedic texts do not subscribe to Mīmāṁsaka's contention that the Vedas advocate the path of Karma only.

37*. This phenomenal world was not in existence at the beginning before its creation. After the dissolution, the world shall cease to exist. In the intervening period, being superimposed on you, the Absolute Existence, it appears to be real. Hence, the world is compared with various modifications of material substances (e. g. bangles, armlets, crowns of gold, a pitcher or a dish of earth). It is like a figment of imagination with no basis in reality. But ignorant people regard it as the Reality.

38**. When the individual soul (*Jiva*) embraces Māyā under the influence of Nescience (Avidyā), he assumes her *guṇas* and wrongly identifies himself with the body, sense-organs etc. Thus losing (forgetting) his pristine glory and blissful nature, he succumbs to death (and is involved in the cycle of birth and death i. e., *Saṁsāra*). On the contrary, even as a serpent casts off his slough, you discard Māyā. Hence, you have preserved within you divine nature, infinite power and eight supra-human mystical powers. Thus you shine with your infinite power and glory.

39***. If the *Yogins* who try to control their senses do not exterminate the roots of passions from their heart, you, even though abiding in the hearts of these hypocrites, are not accessible to them, are like a diamond (necklace) worn round the neck but forgotten by the wearer. These *yogins*, after gratifying their own senses are flanked with miseries on both the sides, O Lord—One from Death i. e., *Saṁsāra* that has not been over-

* VR differs :

It is only the ignorant who believe that this universe did not exist before creation and it will be non-existent in future and, therefore, it is not existing at present also and that it is unreal like a figment of fiction.

** VR : (The gist only).

The *Jiva*, being deluded by Māyā is invested with a body (which is product of *Prakṛti*). Through the body he enjoys objects of senses and identifies himself with it and is subjected to death. He is thus robbed of his inherent knowledge and other qualities.

*** As usual VJ's text is a combination of verse 38.c.d and 32. a,b. : *Yogins* who are desireless and firm in the path of renunciation are blessed by the Lord with a life-free death and he grants them blissful *Mokṣa*.

come and on the other hand, from you who still remain unrealized.

40*. O glorious Lord (endowed with six excellences) ; he who has realized you, does not feel the effect of pleasure or pain as a consequence of meritorious or sinful acts as determined by you. Hence, he is not aware of the Vedic injunctions and interdictions which are binding on other embodied beings. (They are not binding on him as he has realized that the soul is distinct from the body.) You are every day ushered through the ears into the heart and are enshrined there in the hearts of men with sage advice and precepts transmitted from generation to generation. And you are ultimately attained by them as you are the final goal called *Mokṣa*.

41. Even lords of celestial regions (like god Indra, Brahmā) have not been able to fathom you or know your limit as you are Infinite. Even you have not done so, due to your infiniteness, as within you abide heaps of innumerable Eggs of Universes each along with its seven protective sheaths, which propelled by Time float about like particles of dust (driven by the wind) in the sky. Due to the infinite greatness of yours, Śrutis, finding that they end in you (as their goal), convey you indirectly by negating everything else than you.

*The glorious Lord (Nārāyaṇa) said :*

42. Having thus heard the exposition of the Śrutis regarding the Soul—Sanaka and other (mind-born) sons of Brahmā who had already accomplished their spiritual perfection, now worshipped Sanandana (who was their guide or resource person at the spiritual seminar).

43. The essence of all the *Vedas*, *Purāṇas* and *Upaniṣads* was in this manner churned out and extracted by those noble-souled Sanaka and other brothers who were the earliest creation of god Brahmā and who traversed through the sky.

44. O son of god Brahmā (Nārada) ! You bear in mind with faith this exposition about the (nature of the) soul which

40*. *eṣa nityo mahimā Brāhmaṇasya ṇa karmaṇā vardhate no kanīyān*, etc.
*—*Brhad Up.* 4.4.23

is capable of reducing to ashes all the desires of men and then you may move about, at will, anywhere in the world.

*Śri Śuka said :*

45. Having received with faith and reverence what was thus expounded to him by the Sage Nārāyaṇa, Nārada, the self-controlled observer of life-long celibacy who could retain in memory what he had heard but once, and had already accomplished his purpose (in life), humbly submitted as follows :

*Nārada submitted* :

46. "Obeisance to that celebrated Lord Kṛṣṇa (Nārāyaṇa) of spotless hallowing glory, who assumes charming forms for the non-recurrence of birth (i. e. emancipation from *Saṁsāra*) of all beings.

47. Having thus respectfully bowed that first Sage Nārāyaṇa and his other high-souled disciples, Nārada straight-way arrived at the hermitage of my father, Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana.

48. He was warmly received by the worshipful sage Vyāsa. Seating himself comfortably, he described to him (Vyāsa) in details what he heard from the lips of the sage Nārāyaṇa.

49. O king Parīkṣit ! I have in this way replied to you in details the question that you put to me (by reporting to you the hymn sung by Śrutis) with a view to bringing out how far the *Brahman* which is attributeless and undefinable, can be reached by the mind.

50. One should constantly contemplate Lord Hari who keeps the Māyā at a distance from him due to his absolute state ; Who is the architect of the universe, planning its beginning, middle and end. He is the Controller of the unmanifest *Prakṛti* and of *Jīvas*. After creating the universe, He entered into it along with Jīvas and controls them. Having taken asylum with him, the Jīva protects himself against the Māyā. Having attained to him, the *Jīva* sheds his ignorance, just as a man who falls deep asleep loses the consciousness of his person (body).

## CHAPTER EIGHTYEIGHT

*God Rudra Saved*

*The King (Parikṣit) enquired* :

1. Out of gods, Asuras or human beings, whoever worship (and propitiate) god Śiva who himself has renounced all worldly pleasures are blessed with wealth and enjoyment of pleasures, but not so in the case of those who are the votaries of Viṣṇu though he is the consort of the goddess of wealth.

2. We entertain a grave doubt and we desire to know (its solution) as to why the goal (i. e. the fruit achieved) of those who worship these two deities of different dispositions, is quite contrary to their expectation ? Why do the Devotees of the Lord of Lakṣmī do not get wealth and while those of Śiva become rich ?

*Śrī Śuka said* :

3. God Śiva is ever associated with his Śakti. He is invested with three *guṇas* viz. *Sattva, rajas* and *tamas* and is the presiding deity of the three types of (Cosmic) ego characterised by the *guṇas*, viz. *sattva* (or *vaikārika* ego, *rajas* (*taijasa* type of Ego) and *tamas* (or tāmasa type of ego).

4. Out of these three types of ego were evolved sixteen modifications or products (viz. mind from the *sāttvika* ego, ten sense-organs from *rājasic* type of *ahaṁkāra* and five *bhūtas* or elements from the *tāmasic* type of ego). He who adores one of these potencies is blessed with all types of earthly prosperity.

5. Lord Hari, on the other hand, is unaffected by and hence devoid of the attributes (of *Prakṛti*). He is the Supreme Person far beyond the range of *Prakṛti*. He is omniscient and is a witness to everything. A person who worships him becomes bereft of *guṇas*.

6. After the conclusion of the Horse-sacrifice, while listening to the exposition of the righteous duties, your grandfather, King Yudhiṣṭhira asked this very question to Kṛṣṇa.

7. The glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa who descended into the race of Yadu for blessing people with the *Summum bonum* (by

showing the way to *Mokṣa*) was very much pleased with that question and explained to him who was very desirous and eager to listen to him.

*The Lord explained* :

8. I gradually relieve a person of his wealth on whom I wish to bestow my grace. Then his own relatives, finding him penniless and hard-pressed with adversity and sorrow-stricken, forsake him (of their own accord).

9. When (he finds that) all his efforts with the desire of acquiring wealth have been futile, he becomes despondent and forms friendship with persons who are devoted to me. Then only I shower my grace on him.

10. My grace is the revelation of myself i. e. of Brahman. It is too subtle (to be comprehensible), Pure consciousness and infinite Reality (existence).

10A*. The intelligent person who realizes it as his own-self is liberated from *Saṁsāra*. Hence, people avoid me as one too difficult to be propitiated and turn to other gods (to worship).

11. Thereupon, having obtained sovereignty and prosperity from gods who are easily and quickly propitiated, they become arrogant, puffed up with pride and maddened. They forget the very gods who have bestowed boons on them and despise them.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

12. Gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and others are competent to pronounce a curse or grant boons. But dear Parīkṣit, God Śiva and Brahmā accord grace or curse instantaneously. (The moment they are pleased or displeased), but not so god Viṣṇu.

13. As an illustration of this, those versed in ancient lore cite the ancient legend how god Śiva after giving a boon to Vṛkāsura, found himself in danger.

10A* Additional half verse from the vṛndāban edition (Quoted from Bh. P. in Bengali script).

14. There was an Asura called Vṛka, the son of Śakuni. That wicked-minded fellow saw Nārada on the way and asked him which god out of the trinity (of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva) was easily and quickly propitiated.

15. Nārada advised him, "Do propitiate god Śiva and you will quickly accomplish your purpose. He gets pleased with slight merit and is enraged at the slightest offence.

16. When the ten-faced demon Rāvaṇa and Bāṇa eulogised him like bards, he bestowed on them unparalleled prosperity and sovereignty in consequence of which he found himself involved in serious troubles (Rāvaṇa uprooted mount Kailāsa, the residence of god Śiva and Bāṇa made him the protector of his capital city).

17. Being thus advised, that Asura began to propitiate god Śiva by offering to him the oblation of his own flesh chopped from his body, through the mouth of the fire-god, at the place called Kedāra in the Himālayas.

18. Out of desparation for not being able to visualize god Śiva (in spite of the sacrifice of his flesh), the Asura, on the seventh day, (took a bath in the holy waters of that place) and began to cut with sharp weapon his head with wet matted hair.

19. At that time the highly merciful god (with matted hair) who was brilliant like the fire-god, came out of the sacrificial fire. Just as we would do (to prevent our friends from suicide), he held both of his arms with his own and prevented him from that act. By the blessed touch of Śiva, his body became healed of wounds and perfect as before.

20. He spoke to him, "Dear Asura ! It is enough (desist from offering your head to me). Seek of me any boon you desire and I shall confer it on you. I am pleased even if water is reverentially offered to me by people devoted to me. You have unnecessarily tortured your body so cruelly.

21. That extremely sinful demon sought the god a boon that spelt terror to all living beings. (He requested as a boon:) "May every body die on whose head I shall lay my palm."

22. Hearing that prayer, Lord Śiva got depressed at heart (for a moment), O Parīkṣit. But laughingly he said,

"Yes. Be it so." and gave the boon which was like giving nectar to a serpent.

23. The Asura who was thus granted boon, was really desirous of laying his hand upon Gaurī (Pārvatī, the spouse of god Śiva). And they say that with a view to testing the efficacy of that boon, he advanced to place his hand upon the head of god Śiva himself. And god Śiva was seized with terror at his own act (of granting the boon.)

24. Agitated with terrific fear and trembling, he began to run fast to the northern direction with the demon pursuing (close on his heels). He ran traversing the whole of the earth, the heaven and the end of cardinal points.

25. Lords of gods did not know how to counteract or intervene and they kept quiet. At last Lord Śiva went to Śvetadvīpa the ever-refulgent region of Viṣṇu lying beyond the sphere of darkness.

26. There abides Lord Nārāyaṇa in person, the ultimate resort of those who have renounced everything for the Lord, and hence have attained serenity of mind (by getting rid of passions like love, hatred, etc.) and have refrained from all forms of violence, an abode having attained which a person never returns to *Saṁsāra*.

27. Perceiving the predicament of god Śiva, the Lord who destroys all afflictions, assumed the form of a small boy by his Yoga-māyā and manifested himself at a distance.

28. Shining like fire by his refulgence and adorned with his girdle of *muñja* grass, deer-skin, staff and a rosary of Rudrākṣa beads and with *darbha* grass in his hand, he paid obeisance to the demon as if in deep humility.

*The Lord said* :

29. O son of Śakuni, evidently your honour is much exhausted. Have you come from a long distance ? Have rest for a short while (for a minute) (If proper care is taken of this body,) it fulfills all the cherished desires like the heavenly wish-yielding cow.

30. If the matter is fit for our ears, (i.e. if there be no objection in hearing of your intention) O mighty one, let me know on what you have set your mind. Generally a man desires

to accomplish his purpose with the help of his chosen assistants.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

31. When he was thus accosted in such nectar-showering words, the demon felt refreshed and confided to him (Viṣṇu) all that he had done before.

*The glorious Lord (disguised as a Brahmacārin) remarked* :

32. If this be the case, we do not believe in his (Śiva's) words; for he has been reduced to the State of a goblin (*Piśāca*) by the curse of Dakṣa, and is now the king of *Pretas* and *Piśācas* (evil spirits).

33. If you regard Śiva as the preceptor of the world and still have faith in him, O king of Dānavas, you may easily test the truth of his words this very moment, O dear Asura, by placing your palm on your head.

34. If the words of Śiva are found to be false, you straightway kill that liar so that he may not live to utter a falsehood again."

35. In this way his mind was changed by the wonderful and extremely soft, winning words of the Lord. And the wicked-minded fellow in utter forgetfulness placed his palm on his own head.

36. That very moment the Asura fell down with his head split up as if he was struck down with vajra (thunder-bolt). And there were applauding shouts like "Victory" "Salutations" and "Well-done" in the heavens.

37. When the wicked demon Vṛkāsura was killed, gods, sages, manes (ancestors) and Gandharvas let down showers of flowers and god Śiva was rescued from a dangerous situation.

38-39. To god Śiva who was thus saved, spoke the glorious Lord Viṣṇu: God Mahādeva ! This sinful fellow has been killed by his own sins. O Īśa (Controller of the world) ! What creature who has committed sin (or offence) against the great can possibly be safe and happy ? What need be said when the offence is committed against the controller of the universe and the father of the world like you ?

40. Whoever hears or relates this account of Liberation of god Śiva (from mortal danger) by Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Soul, who is the veritable sea of incomprehensible powers, becomes emancipated from *Saṁsāra* (the cycle of births and deaths) and becomes free from the danger of enemies as well.

## CHAPTER EIGHTYNINE

*Supremacy of Viṣṇu Vindicated* :

*Restoration to Life of Brāhmaṇa's Sons*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. On one occasion, sages were engaged in performing a sacrificial session (of a long duration). O king, in that session a question was raised for discussion as to who of the trinity of the ruling gods (i.e. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva) was the greatest.

2. In order to satisfy their curiosity, they deputed the sage Bhṛgu, the son of god Brahmā, to ascertain the truth. And he went to the assembly of god Brahmā.

3. In order to test the worth of that god, Bhṛgu, did not pay him homage or chant any hymn in his praise. The worshipful god Brahmā (took it as an affront and) was enraged with him, and was as if aglow with his burning wrath.

4. Considering that the insulting person was his own son, the self-born god Brahmā quenched the fiery wrath provoked in his mind, by restraining himself, just as fire is extinguished by water (which is its own product.)

5. From the assembly of god Brahmā, he repaired to mount Kailāsa (the abode of god Śiva). God Mahādeva was delighted (at his brother's surprise visit) and arising from his seat, he proceeded to embrace him.

6. But Bhṛgu showed no desire for it (avoiding him) with the remark, "you tread evil path, (flouting the authority of the Vedas" you have adopted the heretic way of life

and apply ashes of dead bodies from burning grounds). The tradition goes that the god flew in rage and with fiery eyes, he snatched up his trident and rushed forth to strike him.

7. His consort Pārvatī, however, fell at his feet and pacified him with sweet words. Thereupon Bhṛgu proceeded to Vaikuṇṭha where Lord Viṣṇu abides.

8-9. God Viṣṇu was then lying on the lap of the goddess Śrī (Lakṣmī). Bhṛgu kicked Him with his foot on his chest. The glorious Lord Viṣṇu, the resort of all saints, got up (in reverence) along with the goddess Lakṣmī. He alighted from the bed-stead and bowing down reverentially to the sage addressed him, "Welcome O Brāhmaṇa sage; please have some comfortable rest on the seat for a while. O mighty sage, it behoves you to forgive us, as we were not aware of your arrival.

10. "O great sage ! Your feet are so very soft and delicate, my dear !" With these words he began to massage soothingly the feet of the Brāhmaṇa with his own hands.

11. "Be pleased to purify me along with my realm and the protectors of the world that are within me, with the water washing the feet of your worship—water which sanctifies even the holy waters of sacred places.

12. Worshipful sire ! From to-day I have been the sole abode of goddess Lakṣmī. With my sins completely washed off by the touch of your feet (which symbolise knowledge) the goddess of prosperity (Lakṣmī in the form of *Śrī Vatsa* mark) shall ever reside on my bosom."

12A. *Vj's Text.*

And let the mark (of your foot-print on my bosom) be known by the name *Śrī Vatsa* from to-day."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

13. When Lord Viṣṇu addressed him thus, Bhṛgu felt deeply satisfied and happy with his melodious words in a deep low tone. He remained silent as his voice was choked with over-whelming feeling of devotion, his eyes, over-flowing with tears.

14. Returning to the place of that sacrificial session, Bhṛgu fully recounted to those sages who were well-versed in the Vedas, what he experienced (in the realm of the three gods).

15. Listening to that report the sages were wonder-struck and had their doubt (about the supremacy of the three gods) dispelled. They came to believe god Viṣṇu to be the Supreme-most god, who bestows tranquility and fearless State (*Mokṣa*).

16. For god Viṣṇu is directly the fountain head of righteousness, spiritual knowledge, renunciation (of four kinds) in association with eight kinds of mystical powers (*Siddhis*) and glory, which cleanly washes off the dirt (sins) of the soul.

17. He is called the highest goal of sages and of pious people who have completely renounced violence, are serene, endowed with equanimity of mind (or out-look of equality towards all) and non-attachment.

18. His beloved personality is constituted of pure *Sattva-guṇa*; Brāhmaṇas, his beloved deities. Persons of keen and subtle intellect who are of serene mind and who covet for no blessings, resort to him.

19. He has three forms which are invested of Māyā consisting of three *guṇaṣ* : The Rākṣasa, the *Tāmasic* form, Asura, the *Rājasic* and gods, the *Sāttvic* form. (He is unattached to all these *guṇas* but) *Sattva* is the means of attaining the lore of Bhakti[1] and he is thus associated with *Sattva*.

*Śrī Śuka said* :

20. In this way, the Brāhmaṇas who were performing the sacrifice, came to this conclusion for dispelling the doubts of the people. By worshipping the lotus-feet of the Supreme Person, they attained to his blissful state.

*Sūta said* :

21. This story is the very nectar scented with the fragrance of the Lotus-mouth of Śuka, the son of the sage Vyāsa. It celebrates the glory of the Supreme Person of hallowing renown. It dispels the fear of the cycle of births and deaths (*saṁsāra*). The wanderer in this cycle of transmigration, who constantly drinks this nectar with the goblets of his ears, gives up fatigue of wandering through the paths of *Saṁsāra*.

*Śrī Śuka began to narrate* :

22. It is traditionally reported that on one occasion, at Dvārakā, the newly born son of a Brāhmaṇa woman died

immediately as he touched the ground (i.e. the moment she delivered the child, it expired), O descendant of Bharata !

23. The Brāhmaṇa took the dead body of the child and placed it at the gates of the royal palace and over-whelmed with grief and depressed in mind he wept bitterly and said.[1]

1. *VJ's Test supplied the back-ground with the following additional verses.*

23.1. On one occasion Śrī Kṛṣṇa embarked on performing a horse-sacrifice and he sent out a horse consecrated for the sacrifice, to go round the world.

23-2-3. Kṛṣṇa, the delight of Yādavas, sent Hārdikya, Kṛtavarmā, Yuyudhāna, Sātyaki, Cārudeṣṇa, sudeṣṇa, Pradyumna, Sāmba, Aṁśumant, Subhānu and a big army of Yādavas for the protection of the horse.

23.4. In a short period of time, they went round the earth and brought back the consecrated horse, O prominent Bharata.

23.5. Hearing the report that Lord Kṛṣṇa was desirous of performing a Horse-sacrifice, O Parikṣit, sages who performed penance for a long time and observed their religious vows rigorously, came to attend it.

23.6-7. Having appointed sacrificial priests like *Hotṛ* (to recite the hymns and *mantras* from the *Ṛgveda*), *Adhvaryu* (the officiating priest expert in the *Yajurveda*), *Udgātṛ* (to chant the hymns from the *Sāmaveda*) and other priests to officiate over the sacrifice as per prescribed procedure, the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa performed the ceremony of declaration of that day (of commencing the sacrifice) as the most auspicious (*Puṇyāha-maṅgala*) by sages and prominent Brāhmaṇas who were experts in the sacrificial lore and got himself consecrated for the sacrifice.

23.8. Kings and rulers of various countries who, with their refulgent crowns and diadems, looked brilliant like gods, came to attend upon him (at the sacrifice).

23.9. Pāṇḍavas and other kings who were eager to see the sacrifice and were invited by Kṛṣṇa came to Dvārakā, O King Parikṣit.

23.10. While the glorious celebration of the horse-sacrifice was going on, Brāhmaṇas got thoroughly satisfied with the feasts and gifts of cloth, cows, land and gold.

23.11. Being initiated as a sacrificer, Śrī Kṛṣṇa saw to it that the prominent Brāhmaṇas got to their satisfaction all their desired objects as well as fed with whatever they wished to eat.

23.12-13. While kings occupied their respective seats all round and the cane-bearers, making a sound of the canes, were declaring "Silence please," a certain Brāhmaṇa with roots of grass (or a cane) in his hand, rushed in and standing at the gate of the sacrificial hall, raised-up his hands and cried out loudly in affliction. His throat was parched with hunger, face dried up, tears were flowing from his eyes and with distressed heart, he cried out thus:

24. "I have lost my child, because of the sin of a base kṣattriya (ruler) who is a hater of Brāhmaṇas, wicked-minded, greedy and voluptuous.

25. Subjects who serve a king who takes pleasure in violence, is of a bad character and has no control over his senses, perish by being subjected to perpetual impoverishment and unending miseries."[1]

26. In this manner, the Brāhmaṇa sage screamed out the same condemning appeal the second and the third time and left the dead body of the child at the royal gate.

27. Hearing that cry while he was near Śrī Kṛṣṇa Arjuna enquired with the Brāhmaṇa when his nineth child was lost.

28. "Is there no Kṣattriya in your house (i.e. in this city) who can wield a bow ? These Kṣattriyas (Yādavas who cannot protect their subjects) are not better than Brāhmaṇas engaged in this sacrifice.[2]

29. The Kṣattriya (rulers) of that Kingdom where Brāhmaṇas being robbed of their wealth and being bereaved of their wives and children, have to grieve helplessly, are verily no better than actors on the stage who fill their belly by playing the role of Kṣattriyas.

30. O worshipful Sir, as both of you are so helpless here, I hereby undertake to protect the child that will be born of you. If I fail to fulfil my pledge, I shall enter fire (and burn myself down to death) and expiate myself of that sin."

1. *Here VJ's Text adds* :

25.1. Repeating this (above blame) again, the Brāhmaṇa screamed out again, out of extreme anguish.

25.2. Hearing that, self-respecting Arjuna rose from his high seat near Kṛṣṇa and approaching the Brāhmaṇa enquired.

25.3. "How many children have you O Brāhmaṇa ? What is the trouble with you ? You tell me everything unreservedly. I shall try to make you happy."

25.4. When (sympathetically) enquired thus, the Brāhmaṇa reported: "As soon as my child is born it is immediately taken away that very moment from the lying-in-chamber by some unknown agency, dear Sir."

2. These Brāhmaṇas are performing this sacrifice for these wretched Kṣattriyas who cannot protect their subjects—VJ.

*The Brāhmaṇa remarked* :

31. Saṅkarṣaṇa (Balarāma), Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Pradyumna the foremost archer and Aniruddha, an unparalleled hero have not been able to protect my child.

32. Even the Lords of the world found the achievement of this feat impossible. It is childish on your part to boast like this. We simply don't believe in it.

*Arjuna said* :

33. O Brāhmaṇa, I am neither Balarāma, nor Kṛṣṇa nor Kṛṣṇa's descendant. I am verily that Arjuna, the wielder of the bow famous by the name Gāṇḍīva.

34. Please don't underestimate my prowess, O Brāhmaṇa; even the three-eyed god (Śiva) was delighted with it. I shall defeat the god of death in battle and restore your progeny, Sire.[1]

1. *Here VJ's Text adds* :

34.1. Having inspired confidence in the Brāhmaṇa with this assurance O king, Arjuna requested Kṛṣṇa, "O Lord, please give me permission to go for (protecting the child of) the Brāhmaṇa.

34.2. You may continue your Horse sacrifice with these great men." To Arjuna who was requesting permission to go and who had equipped himself with his quivers and Gāṇḍiva bow, Kṛṣṇa spoke with a smile.

*Lord Kṛṣṇa said* :

34.3 "I shall have to come personally. It won't be possible (for you to protect the child), O Arjuna. The spirit that killed the child, appears to be extra-ordinary."

*Arjuna replied* :

34.4. Indra despite his alliance with the rulers of the spheres, was defeated by me at Khāṇḍava. The three-eyed god Śiva in the guise of a *Kirāta*, was pleased by me with my valour in a battle (with him).

34.5. The demons Nivāta-Kavacas, the residents of Hiraṇyapura, who could not be conquered even by Indra, were killed by me in a fight.

34.6. Can there be any evil spirit more powerful than that, O slayer of demons ? Why do you frighten me ? Please give me permission to go just now."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

34.7. Kṛṣṇa who was thus persuaded, gave permission to Arjuna to go. Arjuna, equipped with his (Gāṇḍiva) bow, went out of the sacrificial hall.

34.8. He ascended his spacious chariot with the banner of the monkey emblem hoisted over it. He placed the Brāhmaṇa in front of him and rode round the village.

35. The Brāhmaṇa, so confidently assured by Arjuna, went home pleased at heart, as he had heard the exploits of Arjuna.

36. When the time of delivery of his wife approached, that eminent Brāhmaṇa entreated Arjuna anxiously, "Pray protect my child from death."[1]

37. Arjuna sipped water (as *Ācamana*) and bowing to the great god Śiva, he invoked all his divine missiles and kept his bow Gāṇḍīva ready.

38. Arjuna as it were encaged the lying-in-chamber by creating a fence of arrows charged with *mantras* of various missiles on all side, above and below that chamber.

39. Then the wife of that Brāhmaṇa gave birth to a son who cried well (repeatedly), but in an instant, he bodily vanished through the sky.

40. Then the Brāhmaṇa censured Arjuna in the presence of Kṛṣṇa blaming himself, "Look at my folly, in placing faith in the empty bragging of an impotent person.

41. Who else can be capable enough to protect my child whom neither Pradyumna, nor Aniruddha, nor Balarāma nor Śrī Kṛṣṇa were able to protect.

42. Fie npon Arjuna, the boastful liar ! Fie upon the bow of his who indulges in self-advertisement (self-flattery). The wicked fellow, out of his stupidity, brags to restore back what has been snatched away by Fate."

34.9 Arriving at the village of that Brāhmaṇa, he helped him get down from the chariot. When he heard that the Brāhmaṇa's wife had retired into the lying-in-chamber, Arjuna told him, O king.

*Arjuna said* :

34.10. "Go to your house, O Brāhmaṇa. I have given complete protection to you on all sides. Please go and comfort your wife who must be afraid."

1. *VJ's Text adds* :

36.1. When Arjuna was thus requested, he ascended his chariot and mounting the string on the Gāṇḍiva bow hastened to the proximity of the room of confinement.

36.2. The Brāhmaṇa also entered that lying-in-chamber and in a short while cried for Arjuna's help.

43. While the Brāhmaṇa sage was reproaching him, Arjuna used his mystical lore and quickly went to Saṁyamanī, the capital of the god of death (Yama).

44. Not being able to trace the child of that Brāhmaṇa he visited (and explored) the capital cities of the great gods like Indra, Agni, Nairṛta, Soma, Vāyu and Varuṇa and with his weapon ready, he went to the subterranean regions and to regions higher than the celestial region and many other regions.

45. As he could not trace the child and had failed to fulfill his pledge, he prepared himself to enter fire but was prohibited by Kṛṣṇa from doing so.

46. (Kṛṣṇa said) "I shall show you the sons of that Brāhmaṇa. Please do not disrespect yourself in this way. Those (who are censuring you now) will permanently establish (and sing of) our pure spotless glory.

47. Having comforted him with these words, the glorious Almighty Lord ascended his divine chariot along with Arjuna and sped towards the west.

48. Then passing over the seven island-continents and the seven oceans dividing those continents, the seven mountain-ranges and the *Lokāloka* mountain[1] (which divides the visible world from the region of darkness), he entered the region of darkness.

49. O prominent Bharata ! In that pitch-black darkness, his horses, Śaibya, Sugrīva, Meghapuṣpa and Balāhaka lost their way and could not proceed.

50. Noticing their plight, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Master of all experts in Yoga, discharged ahead his discus Sudarśana which was effulgent like one thousand suns shining simultaneously.

51. Piercing through that extremely horrendous, palpably thick all-pervading darkness, the effect of *Prakṛti* or created by the Lord himself with its exceedingly enormous lustre, the Sudarśana discus with the speed of the mind (quick like a thought or imagination) cut its way like the arrow of Rāma

1. A mythical mountain that encircles the earth and is beyond the seven continents and the encircling sea of fresh water. The sun's rays do not reach beyond that mountain.

discharged from the bow-string penetrated through hostile army.

52. Following the path cut by the discus, (the chariot reached the end of darkness), Arjuna saw that Supreme, Infinite, dazzling lustre beyond that dark-region (of *Prakṛti*). But his eyes became dazed and he closed the eyes.

53. Thereafter he entered water (the ocean) adorned with huge billows lashed up by powerful tempestuous gales. Verily he saw then a wonderful mansion highly resplendent with thousands of columns of brilliant jewels.

54. And in that mansion, he beheld the presence of the Serpent Śeṣa (Ananta) who was the most formidable yet wonderful to look at. He was radiant with brilliant jewels on each of his thousand hoods, with two fierce eyes. His body was white like the Himālayas but was black at the neck and in the tongue.

55. He beheld the all-pervading Lord of infinite powers resting on the soft and comfortable coils of serpent Śeṣa. The complexion of that most exalted Super-human being was dark like a cloud surcharged with water. He wore a yellow garment. He had a cheerful countenance and beautiful longish eyes.

56. The effulgence of the numerous precious jewels in his crown and the refulgence of his ear-rings enveloped (like a halo) and lit up his profuse curly locks of hair. He had eight long beautiful arms. He wore the brilliant Kaustubha gem round his neck and had the *Śrī Vatsa* mark (on his chest), and he was decorated with Vanamālā (a garland of five coloured forest flowers reaching upto the knees).

57. He was the Lord of Supreme gods who was attended upon by Sunanda and Nanda, the chief of his guards, by the discus Sudarśana and other weapons in a corporal form and by his four potencies, viz. *Puṣṭi* (grace), *Śrī* (splendour, beauty and affluence), *Kīrti* (Fame) and the Invincible potency (Māyā) and eight miraculous powers (*Siddhis*).

58. Śrī Kṛṣṇa bowed to the Infinite Lord who was himself in another form, Arjuna filled with awe at his sight, paid him obeisance. Both of them stood with folded palms. The Perfect Person, the controller of Brahmā and other lords (presi-

ding deities) of the spheres, smilingly addressed in a deep and sonorous voice to them.

59. "The sons of the Brāhmaṇa were brought by me desirous of seeing you both. Both of you have incarnated on the earth by your part-manifestations for the protection of righteousness. Having killed the demons who have become a burden to the earth as soon as possible, return to our presence.

60. Both of you are famous sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa who have already accomplished all blessings. But for the maintenance of the world-order, you both have set a model of righteousness for others to follow.

61-62. Thus commanded by the glorious Supreme Deity, those two dark-complexioned heroes (Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna) accepted the mandate, respectfully bowed to the Perfect Being, and taking with them the sons of the Brāhmaṇa returned with delighted hearts to their home by the same route they came. They restored to the Brāhmaṇa his sons grown up according to their age but similar in appearance as their father saw them (at the time of their birth).

63. Having visualized the shining region (known as Mahākālapura of Viṣṇu (or the glorious power of Viṣṇu, Arjuna was exceedingly astonished. He realized whatever prowess and manliness is possessed by a man is due to the grace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.[1]

64. Displaying in this way many feats and exploits, Śri Kṛṣṇa, enjoyed worldly pleasures as well as worshipped the

1. *Here VJ's Text adds*:

63.1. Śri Kṛṣṇa re-entered the sacrificial hall which was filled to its capacity with family priests, Brāhmaṇas and sacrificial priests, and eminent Kṣattriyas.

63.2. With the approval of the Brāhmaṇas, he went through the expiatory rites prescribed for moving out of the sacrificial precincts during the consecration period.

63.3 O excellent Kuru ! After completing the sacrifice according to *Śāstric* procedure, he satisfied the Brāhmaṇas granting all their desired objects. He worshipped the sacrificial priests and other sages.

63.4. Having performed the concluding bath (*avabhṛtha majjana*) in the great river Yamunā, the excellent member of the Yadu race passed his time happily in the company of great sages.

(Here ends the hundredth chapter in VJ's text)

Supreme Deity by performing great sacrifices on an exceedingly superior scale.

65. The glorious Lord was himself endowed with overflowing affluence, power, etc. just as god Indra showers down water profusely in the proper (i.e. the rainy) season, he also in due time incessantly bestowed all the desired-objects on his subjects, Brāhmaṇas and others.

66. He personally slew a number of unrighteous Kings and eliminated the remaining irreligious ones through Arjuna and others. He easily enforced abidance by the righteous path (and thus re-established *dharma*) all over the world through Yudhiṣṭhira and other virtuous Kings.

## CHAPTER NINETY

*The Song of Queens : Resume of Kṛṣṇa's Sports.*

1-2. The Lord of the goddess Śrī (i.e. Śrī Kṛṣṇa) lived in great comfort and happiness in his capital city of Dvārakā. It was richly endowed with all types of affluence and prosperity. It was peopled with leaders of the Vṛṣṇi clan and by their women who were always dressed in immaculate, gorgeous garments. They were sparkling with the radiance of blooming youth. While they played with balls, etc. in their mansions, they appeared like flashes of lightning.

3. On the roads and streets, there was a heavy traffic—the highways being crowded with young elephants exuding ichor, well-adorned soldiers, richly caparisoned horses, chariots resplendent with burnished gold plates.

4. It was richly surrounded with parks and pleasure gardens beautified with rows of blossoming trees which were resounded with the musical notes and warblings of birds and humming bees.

5. Lord Kṛṣṇa who was the sole beloved consort of sixteen thousand queens, assumed as many various attractive

forms as he had queens and severally sported with them in their separate resplendent palaces of surpassing affluence.

6. The swimming pool in each of these mansions was full of crystal clear water scented with the pollen of full blown lotuses of various kinds such as *Kalhāra, Kumuda* and was loud with the warbling of birds.

7. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of prosperity, entered the waters of those (swimming) tanks and sported freely. His bosom (*lit.* body) was smeared with the saffron paste applied on the breasts of his queens as they embraced him (during the water-sports).

8. His glory was then sung by Gandharvas and Sūtas; Māgadhas and Bandins were gleefully playing upon musical instruments like *mṛdaṅga*, kettle-drums, tom-toms and lutes.

9. Śrī Kṛṣṇa was being drenched with jets of waters discharged through syringes by his consorts who were laughing all the while. He, in return, profusely sprinkled water on them and thus he sported with his spouses like Kubera, King of Yakṣas, playing with Yakṣa women.

10. Their thighs and breasts became prominent to view through their wet *Saris* (garments). While they were sprinkling water on Kṛṣṇa, they advanced to him on the pretext of snatching away the syringe from him and embraced him. Due to a thrill of passionate desire (at the touch of Kṛṣṇa's person) their countenances beamed with great pleasure and they appeared brilliant and beautiful.

11. Śrī Kṛṣṇa got his garland (*Vanamālā*) tinged with saffron from the breasts of his consorts (while they embraced him). The knot of his locks of hair was loosened (during that amorous sport). Sprinkling and being sprinkled with water by his youthful wives, he sported with them like a king-elephant surrounded by she-elephants (spouting jets of water on him).

12. (At the end of the water-sport) Śrī Kṛṣṇa and his spouses gave (as gifts) their clothes and ornaments to the male and female dancers and those who lived by the profession of vocal and instrumental music.

13. While Śrī Kṛṣṇa was sporting thus, his (graceful) gait, (sweet) talk, (amorous) glances and (winning) smiles as well as his jokes, dalliances and embraces enchanted (and carried away) the hearts (of his queens).

14. So sang the queens of Kṛṣṇa as they being absorbed in him, remained speechless. While they were intensely thinking of the lotus-eyed Lord, they, sometimes, behaved like dullard and sometimes like a lunatic, uttered the following verses. Please listen.

*The queens said :*

15. "O she-osprey ! Lord Kṛṣṇa has covered his ever wakeful consciousness and has gone to sleep at night. Why don't you sleep ? Why have you lost your sleep and are wailing ? O friend, has your heart too been pierced deeply by the noble sportive glances of the Lotus-eyed Lord, like us ?

16. O *Cakravāki* (Red goose), at night you close your eyes but alas ! you continuously lament so piteously ! Is it because you cannot see your mate ? Or are you a female slave like us of the Lord and desire to wear on your braids of hair the garland that rolls on (and is touched by) the feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

17. O ocean, why is it that you roar and thunder incessantly and do not get any sleep at all ? Is it because you have been deprived of your beautifying ornaments like the gem Kaustubha and others ! you have been reduced to our irrecoverable stage (who are deprived of our beautiful painting on our breasts, etc. by contact with Śrī Kṛṣṇa at the time of amorous sports).

18. O moon, you have grown emaciated as you are a victim to the incurable disease of consumption. Hence, you are incapable of dispelling darkness with your rays. Is it due to your loss of memory, like us about the sweet secret talks indulged in by Lord Mukunda (Kṛṣṇa) that you have lost your power of expression ? At least you look like that to us. (We think it that way).

19. O Southern wind from mountain Malaya, what act unpleasant to you has been committed by us that you provoke the passion of love in our heart which is already torn and tattered by the side-glances of Śrī Kṛṣṇa ?

20. O beautiful cloud, (due to your similarity to Kṛṣṇa in complexion and his quality of removing the sufferings of the miserable—by showering your grace in the form of water)

you are really a beloved friend of the Lord of Yādavas (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) who is adorned with Śrīvatsa. Hence you, being attached to him with bonds of love like us, are lost in his meditation. Your heart too must be agitated with keen anxiety and is excessively anguished for him. You are, therefore, constantly remembering him and shedding profuse tears like us. Contact with Śrī Kṛṣṇa is really very painful.

21. O Cuckoo, blest with sweet notes ! Your melodious cooing is so sweet like nectar that it will infuse life into the dead. You imitate the sweet voice and utterances of our beloved Lord. Please tell me what pleasant services, I may do to you to-day.

22. O generous-hearted mountain, you are the supporter of the earth. You neither move nor speak anything. It appears that you are deeply absorbed in thinking about some great object (or project). Do you long to place the lotus-feet of the delight of Vasudeva (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) on your breasts (Breast-like peaks) as we pine to do ?

23. O rivers ! O ye wives of the sea ! (This being the summer) at present, your deep beds and pools are dried up; you have grown emaciated. Lotuses no longer beautify you. Just as we, being deprived of the amorous glances of our beloved consort, the Lord of Mathura, are robbed of our hearts and have become extremely lean and thin, you are denied the love-laden glances of your Lord in the form of rain showers (and are reduced to this plight).

24. (By chance there arrived a swan. Regarding it to be an emissary of Kṛṣṇa, one of the queens addressed it). Welcome, O dear Swan ! Be seated. Have some milk to drink. Tell us some news about Śrī Kṛṣṇa the descendant of Śūra. We look upon you as a messenger (between us and Śrī Kṛṣṇa). Is the invincible Lord hale and hearty ? Does he of fickle friendship remember what he confided and professed to us in our privacy? (If you say that he has deputed you as he remembers us) O insignificant emissary (who come from a faithless lover) why should we resort to him ? (If he invites us to make friends as you say) convey our message when Śrī (the goddess Lakṣmī) who cheating us all, monopolised his company is not with him. If he says, "How is it possible that she who

is exclusively devoted to him can be avoided", ask him "Among all women is Śrī the only woman who is devoted to him ? Are we not so ?"

25. It is by virtue of such deep constancy and devotion to Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the masters of Yoga that the consorts of Kṛṣṇa attained to the Supreme State of *Mokṣa*.

26. Kṛṣṇa's great glory is widely sung in exquisite poetry and songs. Even if (Kṛṣṇa's sports celebrated in songs are) heard, they irresistibly attract the minds of women. What need be said of those who had the privilege of seeing him directly ?

27. How is it possible to evaluate the greatness of the penance of those women who had the privilege to regard the Preceptor of the world as their husband and render him loving service by shampooing (pressing) his feet (and such other personal attention).

28. The Lord who was the asylum of the righteous and saintly people, himself followed the religious injunctions prescribed in the Veda and demonstrated (to the world) again and again that the objectives of human life, viz. religion (righteousness), wealth, enjoyment of worldly pleasures can be secured even in the householder's stage of life.[1]

1. *VJ's Text Adds* :

28.1-2. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the wielder of the Sudarśana discus was ruling over the world, the city of Dvārakā, the abode of the Vṛṣṇis, which was twelve *yojanas* in length, was densely peopled by Sages, Brāhmaṇas, Kṣattriyas, bards and was all the while (permanently) decorated (due to the festivals carried on there all the year round).

28.3-6. (In order to see Lord Kṛṣṇa) Sages of tranquil minds and always engaged in observing religious vows, used to come from sacred places like Piṇḍāraka[2], Kurukṣetra, Śālagrāma, Puṣkara, Vārāṇasi, Prayāga, Veṅkaṭa (Tirupati), Śrī-Parvata[3], from far off places like Gokarṇa and beautiful Candra-tīrtha (the source of the Kāverī from Brahmagiri in

2. Near Golagar in Gujarat, sixteen miles to the east of Dvārakā. It was at this place that sages cursed Sāmba that he would give birth to a Pestle (*Musala*) which will destroy the Yādavas—Vide infra 11.1.

3. Śrī śaila in Karnul district of Andhra Pradesh. It has a temple of Mallikārjuna, one of the twelve *jyotir-liṅgas* of god Śiva. Nāgārjuna, the famous Buddhist philosopher, founder of Mādhyamika School, lived here.

29. Śrīkṛṣṇa who practised supremely ideal righteous way of life of a house-holder, had sixteen thousand and one hundred queens.

30. Of those jewels of women, eight queens of whom Rukmiṇī was the foremost and (the names of) their sons have been already detailed to you in order of seniority, O king !

31. Each of the (Sixteen thousand and one hundred) queens had ten sons from Kṛṣṇa. It means he had ten sons born from each queen. For the Lord's course was never futile (VT. clarifies that no sexual contact of Kṛṣṇa was unfruitful).

Coorg.) from Sahyādri, Bhṛgukṣetra (Broach), Kumāra-hill[1], from the banks of the holy Godāvari, from the Narmadā, from Śūrpāraka (Sopara, Thana Dist. Maharashtra), Prabhāsa, the holy Badarikāśrama from the holy Naimiṣāraṇya and the inaccessible Brahmadurga[2].

28.7. The sages were of different categories (observing different types of vows) : Some subsisted on water, some on mere air; some abstained from food altogether but all of them were firm in the observance of vows, some were clad in bark garments and deer-skin, some grew matted hair, while others had clean-shaven heads.

28.8. Some bathed thrice a day, some strictly observed the vow of silence, some were engaged in the study of the Vedas, while others in reciting praises and hymns to gods.

28.9. Some devoted their minds to contemplation, some determined on meditative trance. Some had only skin and bones in their persons, a bundle of veins and arteries.

28.10. O king Parīkṣit ! These serene-minded sages came from all directions. These meditators on Reality always waited upon Lord Kṛṣṇa, O emperor.

28.11-12. The city of Dvārakā was resounded with the sounds of Kṣattriyas of mighty prowess and of Brāhmaṇas whom penance was the wealth, of Sūtas and Māgadhas who were devoted to singing the glories (of the Lord) and by the auspicious sounding (playing) of musical instruments and by the loud recitation of the Vedas ( by Brāhmaṇas).

28.13. By virtue of the presence of the God of gods, Dvārakā became the most prominent of all sacred places and foremost among all holy places of (sacred waters) which wash off sins.

1. Probably Krauñcagiri, a hill at a distance of one mile from Tiruttani station of the Southern Railway. There is a temple of Kumāra or Kārttika-svāmin on the hill, GAMI, P. 107.

2. Probably the Brahmagiri hill near Tryambakeshwar Nasik District Maharashtra. The other claimant for this name is the hill in Coorg, the Source of the Kāveri. VJ is silent about the identification.

32. Although all those sons were of mighty Prowess, eighteen out of them were great "chariot-warriors" who achieved noble renown. Listen to their names :

33-34. (They are as follows) "Pradyumna, Aniruddha, (Cārudeṣṇa) Dīptimān, Bhānu, Sāmba, Madhu, Bṛhad-bhānu Citra-bhānu, Vṛka, Aruṇa, Puṣkara, Vedabāhu, Śrutadeva Sunandana, Citra-bāhu, Virūpa, Kavi and Nyagrodha.

*VR's Text adds:*

34.1. Trivakra's son Upakrośa was exclusively devoted to Kṛṣṇa. He was a direct disciple of Nārada. He adopted the vow of life-long celibacy.

34.2. The *Sāttvata Tantra* was composed by him. It has laid down Vaiṣṇavite purificatory rites for women, Śūdras and slaves (after which they are admitted to Vaiṣṇavism). By studying the *Tantra*, one attains Liberation from Saṁsāra.

35. Out of these sons of Kṛṣṇa (the enemy of Madhu), O Indra among kings, Pradyumna, the son of Rukmiṇī was the first and he was just like his father in all respects.

36. That great (chariot) warrior married the daughter of Rukmī. He begat by her (a son named) Aniruddha who possessed the might of ten thousand elephants.

37. Aniruddha, himself a grandson of Rukmī through his daughter, married the grand-daughter of Rukmī (through his son). Vajra was born of her and only he survived the destruction from the pestle (in the civil war among the Yādavas).

38. The name of Vajra's son was Pratibāhu whose son was Subāhu. From Subāhu was born Śāntasena and he begat a son called Śatasena.

39. No king born in this family (of Śrī Kṛṣṇa) was destitute of wealth or less prolific in progeny or short-lived or weak or inimical to Brāhmaṇas.

40. Even within the period of tens of thousand of years it is not possible to enumerate all those born in Yadu's family who became famous for their great deeds.

41. It is heard (by tradition) that there were three crores eighty eight hundred teachers for the children of Yadu's family.

42. Who can enumerate the number of the noble-souled Yādavas? King Ugrasena was attended upon by billions of warriors (lit. ten thousand times ten thousand lakhs) of sons.

43. Those very wicked demons who were killed in the wars between gods and demons, were born again as human beings. They became arrogant and troubled the people.

44. For their chastisement and control, gods were commanded by Hari and they descended in the race of Yadu. There were one hundred and one families of Yādavas.

45. The glorious Lord Hari was the guide and controller of all the Yādavas. All the Yādavas who obeyed his command and followed him prospered in every respect.

46*. The Vṛṣṇis dedicated their minds to Śrī Kṛṣṇa so completely that they were not conscious of their own self while doing bodily actions like sleeping, sitting, wandering, speaking, playing, bathing and other (acts of daily routine).

*Additional verses in VJ's text.*

46A. With the sacrificial material produced by his Yogamāyā, he performed sacrifices for twelve years at Kurukṣetra and thereby worshipped the Supreme Soul (which was identical with his self), the main substance or gist of all the Vedas.

46B. He was consecrated for sacrifice by Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana (Vyāsa), Viśvāmitra, Asita, Sāndīpani and Paraśurāma as the preceptors. The Lord of meritorious renown, his elder brother of pious reputation were worshipped by Uddhava.

47. (That Śrī Kṛṣṇa's renown is the holiest of all the holy places and Lord Kṛṣṇa is the best and most prominent of all gods is not wonderful). O King Parīkṣit, when the holy Lord (the holiest of the holy) incarnated in the family of Yadus, it made the holy water of the heavenly Gaṅgā that issues from the water (used for) washing his feet, inferior in holiness to his hallowing renown. (He is so great that) both who hated him or were affectionate to him attained to the

46* VR : VJ : Though they associated with Śrī Kṛṣṇa in activities such as sleeping, sitting, etc. with him, they did not realize that he was Lord Viṣṇu himself but thought him to be a prominent Yādava.

same state of being similar to him. Goddess Lakṣmī for whose favour gods and others are striving, has devoutly dedicated herself to him exclusively. His name whether heard or uttered (even once) dispels everything inauspicious. By him were taught the duties to every *gotra*. He wields in his hand the discus (Sudarśana) which symbolises the Time-spirit (which destroys all). Hence, it is not wonderful that he lightens the burden of the earth.

48. Victorious is Lord Kṛṣṇa who is the sole refuge of all people (and abides in each of them as their indewelling soul). (As a matter of fact, he is eternal and birthless). That he incarnated himself from Devakī is a matter of (ignorant) talk only. Though he is attended upon by prominent Yādava warriors it is with (the might of) his arms that he annihilated all unrighteousness.[1] He completely destroys the sins of all—the mobile and immobile (e.g. grass, creepers, trees and other beings. With his resplendently beautiful countenance and winning smiles, he enhances love in the women of Vraja and the cities (and makes them attain to *Mokṣa* by subduing carnal love.

48.A *VJ's Text adds* :

A man should continuously meditate upon Lord Hari, the Supreme Soul, who is the creator, sustainer and the destroyer of the universe; who after creating the universe entered into it (as the *Antaryāmin*-indwelling soul), who assumed the form of a sage (Vyāsa) and composed this compilation of Purāṇas; having attained to him Śiva gets rid of the bonds of *Prakṛti* and like a bird in sleep, becomes free from the attachment to his body and property and remains in a state of blissful conscious existence, with no fear of returning to birth or *Saṁsāra*.

49. He who is desirous of developing devotion to the (lotus) feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa should listen to the stories of the sportive deeds of the Supreme Lord—the Lord who is trans-

1. *VJ's Text reads differently from this onwards*:
With his arms and lotus-feet set on the earth for lightening the burden of the earth. His personality is the abode of Lakṣmi. By his charming looks and smiling glances, he appeared like the God of Love to them.

cendental to *Prakṛti* and who for the vindication of the path of righteousness ordained by himself, has assumed different sportive forms (such as the Fish, the Tortoise and others) and performed (miraculous) sportful arts suitable to that form and capable of destroying all *Karmas*.

50. By attentively listening to, reciting and constantly meditating on the glorious stories of Lord Mukunda, a man attains to his region which is beyond the jurisdiction of the god of Death (or the Time-spirit) of irresistible force and for the sake of attaining which even the rulers of the earth renounced their (comfortable) house-holder's life (and their kingdoms) and betook themselves to the forest (and performed penance).

*VJ's Text adds* :

50A. He who devoutly and with faith listens to or narrates to others, the life and deeds of Lord Kṛṣṇa (as glorified by Śuka, the son of Vyāsa) of immortal and blissful glory which completely destroy the sin of the world and are a beautiful ornament to the ears of His devotees, can concentrate his mind on the glorious Lord and ultimately attain to his blissful region where there is no fear from any quarter.

## X SKANDHA — APPENDIX

(Additional Chapters in VJ's Text
Ch. No. 50 in VJ's Text)

## CHAPTER FIFTY—I.5

*Jarāsandha's Second Expedition*

*Śrī Śuka said .*

1-4. The mighty king Jarāsandha, the son of Bṛhadratha, who was day and night remembering and smarting under the previous discomfiture (by Lord Kṛṣṇa), invited all the allied princes in the third month (after the defeat) and inspired them to make preparations of war — with the allied forces of the kings of Matsya (mod. Alwar and parts of former states of Jaipur and Bharatpur) *, Mālava, of Cedi (Bundelkhand and adjacent part of Madhya Pradesh), Kuru, Pāñcāla (Rohilkhand but formerly the country from the foothills of the Himālayas upto the Chambal), Kerala, Kulinda (Garhwal and a part of Saharanpur district), Kuntala (Southern Maharashtra), Avanti (country round Ujjain), Kāśī, Gandhāra (former districts of Peshawar and Rawalpindi and Eusofzai country — now in Pakistan), Sṛñjaya, Kaliṅga (Major part of Orissa esp. the South of it). Kekaya (country between the Bias and the Sutlej), Andhra, Daśārṇa (Eastern Malva and Bhopal District), Vang (Western Bengal), Sindhu (lower part of Sindh), Madra (country between the Ravi and the Chinab), Trigartta (Jalandhar and a part of Lahore district), Sauvīra (upper Sindh and southern Punjab) and the warriors from the mountains — all making up an army of twenty-three Akṣauhaṇīs.

5. Accompanied by this army, he crossed the country of Magadha and proceeded towards the West (to Mathura). He, as it were, was dragging with him all the kings with their divisions of the elephants, cavalry, chariots and infantry.

* The identifications of the territories with their modern counterparts is as per N.L. De's GDAMI.

6. Having come to besiege Mathurā, he camped on the bank of the Yamunā, surrounded with the tents of a number of kings and camp followers.

7-8. He entertained himself listening to the eulogies sung by the bards such as *Sūtas*, *Māgadhas* and *bards* and rested. Hearing of the great preparations of war by the mighty king of Magadhas, Kṛṣṇa convened a conference and planned with Balarāma, Vasudeva, Uddhava, Akrūra, Śaineya, Āhuka and Sāraṇa.

9. Having properly planned the strategy at night in consultation with these, he summoned the best of his warriors at dawn before the sunrise.

10. The Lord of incomprehensible nature, divided his army consisting of the four divisions—elephants, horsemen, charioteers and foot-soldiers — in three detachments. Kṛṣṇa deployed these against the army of Jarāsandha, the king of Magadhas as follows :

11. Kṛṣṇa, the slayer of demon Madhu sent Balarāma, Hārdikya, Gada and Sāraṇa by the left side.

12. He sent by the right side Sātyaki, Vipṛthu, Pṛthu and Uddhava along with the army.

13. The Lotus-eyed Lord accompanied by some charioteers, himself entered the vast army of the king of Magadha directly from the front.

14. The army (of Jarāsandha) mixed up of numerous elephants, horses, chariots and foot-soldiers at random was unsuspectingly asleep on the bank of the Yamunā and was enjoying itself happily.

15-16. While the sun was rising on the eastern mountain and the darkness (of night) was being dispelled, and birds were warbling in their nests everywhere, and lotuses were blooming and swarms of bees were sweetly humming, Kṛṣṇa entered the terrible, invincible army of the king of Magadhas.

17. At that time, the horses (of the enemies) were unsaddled and tethered in a line here and there ; and at that time the elephants had no armour on their backs, O King!

18. The soldiers had not taken up their arms and even their hair were not tied. They had not put on their usual coats of mail, and were not riding their horses or vehicles.

19. The chariots were not yoked with horses and the flags were not raised (showing their unpreparedness). At this time, Kṛṣṇa wearing a yellow garment made his way into the army of the Magadhan king.

20. Seeing an army attacking them on three sides, all the kings became confused and were not able to know what to do.

21. Some warriors rallied together, while others fled away out of fear. Some soldiers took up their arms and counter-attacked the enemies (Yādavas) in the battle.

22. Some soldiers had their armours shattered while others had their legs, thighs and arms cut off. Some with their eyes grown red with anger attacked the enemies (the Yādavas).

23. Some soldiers of great valour rode the unsaddled horses and crushing the enemies in the battle, earned a bright, unblemished glory for themselves.

24. Kings suddenly roused from their sleep found the destruction of their army. Some of them put up a fight even without weapons essential for fighting.

25. Some deserted their camps and entered into deep forest. Some approached Jarāsandha, King of Magadhas and hailed, "Be successful in the battle."

26. Govinda entering the inimical forces single-handed in his chariot, killed a number of warriors who put up a fight with their weapons.

27. The mighty Balarāma also surrounded by a big detachment entered the Magadha army by the left side and routed the Magadhan forces.

28. The mighty armed Śaineya also attacked with his big army consisting of elephants, cavalry, chariots and infantry, by the right side and gave the enemy sound drubbing.

29. In this way, the army under the leadership and protection of the king of Magadhas was beaten on all sides, and being terrified, took to their heels in all the directions in a moment.

30. Sātyaki of the Vṛṣṇi clan pursued the army upto five *yojanas* and destroying the Magadhan force, he returned from the battle a victor.

31. Kṛṣṇa forcibly caught a number of elephants big like hills along with their accoutrement, *tomaras*, goads, etc. He collected as spoil chariots along with the weapons, flags and horses yoked to them and carried them to Mathura.

32. In that battle, Kṛṣṇa got as spoils innumerable umbrellas inlaid with gold jewels, numberless *chowries*, crowns, belts, gold armlets, earings and valuable clothes.

33. As per instructions of Kṛṣṇa, the slayer of Kaṁsa, Balarāma, the wielder of the plough as a weapon, brought a vast amount of spoil such as Jarāsandha's treasury, the vehicles, subjects, women of Jarasandha's harem, weapons and ornaments. He presented the wealth collected in the battle to Ugrasena, the king of Yadus.

## CHAPTER FIFTY—II

Ch: 50 in Vj's Text

*The Third Siege of Mathura: Jarāsandha's defeat*

*Śri Śuka said*:

1. Jarāsandha who boasted himself as a leader in battle was defeated by Kṛṣṇa, the destroyer of Madhu. He then proceeded to Śoṇitapura[1] to see Bāṇa, the son of Bali (for help).

2-5. Hearing that his friend defeated in the battle by Kṛṣṇa was coming with his circle of allied kings, Bāṇa of one thousand arms, the ruler of Dānavas went forward to meet and receive him with well-adorned elephants, caparisoned horses, chariots of various shapes, warriors, bevies of courtesans, bands of bards like *Sūta, Magadhas* and *bards* with flags and banners, umbrellas, auspicious trumpets and drums beating, with gold buntings or festoons, multicoloured lamps, pitchers

1. Assamese claim Tejapur as ancient Śoṇitapura, but from Harivaṁśa (ch. 174) it seems that the ancient Śoṇitapura is situated in Kumaun on the bank of the Kedār-Gaṅgā at a short distance from Gupta Kāśi—GDAMI p. 189.

and mirrors. They were extremely close friends and mutual sympathisers.

6. Both of them, solicitous as they were of mutual interests, paid respects to each other. Addressing Bāṇa, in the royal assembly, Jarāsandha spoke :

7. "Be pleased to note this, O king of Dānavas ! I was taken in (in a dastardly surprise attack) at night by the wicked-minded cowherd (Kṛṣṇa) of unrighteous behaviour and robber-like bravado-ness.

8. Many mighty rut-exuding (youthful) elephants and horses, and a number of chariots along with all the equipments and arms there-in were plundered by him.

9. These princely allies of mine did not tolerate (the idea of) my engaging him in a single-handed duel. I was prevented from doing so by these kings who participate in my joys and sorrows, victory and defeat).

10. I have now come here for your majesty's audience. O Lord (of Dānavas) ! Be pleased to render (some military) assistance (to us)." When addressed thus (and being acquainted with Jarāsandha's plight) Bāṇa, the son of Bali, took him (and his allies) to his own capital (Śoṇitapura).

11. He immediately arranged for the reception of the assembly of princely allies with a high feast, bath, beds, perfumes, and leaves of piper-betel (together with areca-nuts, catechu) for chewing after meals.

12-13. He honoured all the royal personages with presents. When Jarāsandha, the foster-son of Jarā, had enjoyed the reception, taken rest and seen the curiosities worth-seeing (in Bāṇa's Capital and comfortably occupied a golden seat after duly decorating himself (with princely ornaments), the king of Dānavas respectfully addressed the assembly of kings.

*Bāṇa said :*

14. O Jarāsandha ! Please do understand it. No empty promise is uttered by me. These elephants, these horses, this kingdom, all these subjects and whatever else is in my possession is absolutely at your disposal.

*Śri Śuka said :*

15. Having promised thus, Bāṇa, the son of Bali, gave to the king of Magadha sixty thousand elephants, hundred thousands of chariots and one million horses swift in speed like the wind and the mind.

16. Bāṇa, the son of Bali, further gave him a contingent of three hundred Dānavas wellknown for their expertise in use of black magic in warfare, equal (in competence and military skill) to himself.

17. He also supplied him with innumerable palanquins of various types, umbrellas, *chowries*, ornaments, dress (clothes) as well as treasures (or utensils), beds, seats and such other requisites, O King.

18. Bāṇa ordered his ministers Kumbhāṇḍa and Kūpakarṇa, the best ones among the Daityas, to help Jarāsandha, O scion of the Kuru race.

19. What a great difference is between Lord Hari who is strong enough to annihilate the combined forces of all gods and Asuras in the world and the poor two ministers of Bāṇa, Kumbhāṇḍa and Kūpakarṇa ? (There cannot be any comparison at all).

20. Not comprehending the (Supreme) power of Viṣṇu, the kings being destined to meet death and encouraged (and instigated) by the king of Magadha, again made war-preparations against Yadus.

21. Taking leave of Bāṇa, the king of Magadha set out of Śoṇitapura. Accompanied with many kings and with four wings (viz. elephant-corps, cavalry, chariot-division and infantry) under his command, he reached Mathura in the course of some days.

22. He besieged that city of high towers, balconies, ornamental arches, wells, gardens and parks and massive fortification and blockaded its gates.

23. He tried to demolish the walls of the city with innumerable spearlike (pointed) rods, axes, pickaxes, clubs and stones hurled with catapults.

24. As the fortification of the city was being knocked down, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, enraged at the report of the return of Jarāsandha, the king of Magadhas, caused the beat-

ing of the war-drums (to alert all people summoning them to fight).

25-26. With Sātyaki, Kṛta-varman, Ugrasena, Gada, Āhuka and Vasudeva at the vanguard and accompanied by well-armed and fully provided armies of chariots, cavalry, elephant-corps and foot-soldiers, the two heroes of immense might and with perfectly undisturbed minds, rushed out like two ferocious lions.

27. Getting out of Mathura, the lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa loudly blew out his big conch Pāñcajanya terrorising the enemies at heart (by its blast).

28-29. Thereupon broke out the fight between Yadus and Kṣatriyas. The Dānava ministers of Bāṇa, Kumbhāṇḍaka and Kūpakarṇa who were expert in the military use of black magic and possessed of great prowess, and accompanied with their Daitya army, fought with Vṛṣṇis with illusory tactics of warfare.

30. Perceiving that his army was suffering through the illusory magical method of fighting, he dispelled all the illusion within a wink of the eye by "Knowledge-missile" He then directed Sātyaki and Kṛtavarman, both of whom were eagerly desirous of fighting, and said :

31. "As both of you have an ardent desire for fighting, you give an extremely terrible fight with those two Daityas who are haughty and extremely desirous for fighting. Thus ordered, those two extremely powerful warriors immediately engaged in the bitterest fight, O King.

32. It is not at all a miracle how Lord Kṛṣṇa with one bow in the hand, single-handedly engaged a hundred Kṣattriyas in a battle, for Hari is verily the (Indwelling) Soul of all, O king.

33. Some elephants fell down dead with their trunks lopped off, and a large number of horses with their necks cut off lay down dead, O King.

34. The earth was scattered over with disjointed chariots shattered to pieces.

35. Soldiers with their bodies besmeared with blood and with their feet (legs), thighs and arms hacked down, fell like

*Kiṁśuka* trees full of blossoms (red flowers) lying uprooted with its main roots cut.

36-37. Volleys of arrows with feathers of kites and peacocks at the butts, polished with oil and well-knit by knots, with golden feathers and pointed arrow-heads were seen discharged from the Śārṅga bow, ten on each soldier, a hundred on every horse, a thousand at every chariot and ten thousand on each of the elephants of the hostile army. That was a tremendously aweful miracle to see.

38. Finding his army of fourfold divisions (infantry, cavalry, the chariot-corps and elephants) being soundly drubbed that way, Jarāsandha, the king of Magadha, driving in his chariot with the ensign bearing the emblem of a horse, attacked Balarāma,

39. Recollecting his previous enmity (due to his defeat by Balarāma), Jarāsandha was enraged at the sight of Balārma's great chariot with gold-plated yoke and palmyra ensign and dashed at him with a mace (*gadā*) in his hand and spoke (challenging him) as follows :

40. "Quickly take up your pestle (-like club) with which you desire to vanquish and conquer the enemies in the battle. Hurry up and demonstrate to me the power of your arms, before I strike you down with my mace.

41. Challenged in this way by the king of Magadhas, Balarāma, with his eyes fired with rage, grasped his terrible pestle brilliant like lightning, just as Yama, the son of the Sun-god, takes up his rod at the end of the world.

42. Brandishing in a circle the pestle for one thousand times, Balarāma, the wielder of the plough as his weapon, quickly discharged that pestle exuding fumes of fire and capable of subduing the pride of the enemies, and roared like a lion, O King !

43. Jarāsandha along with the horses, charioteer and chariot, became agitated by the pestle hurled by Balarāma's arm and found himself cheated in underestimating (Balarāma's strength).

44. Thereupon wielding his mace hard as iron and big like a hill-top, Jarāsandha, making the earth quake under his pace, rushed at Balarāma.

45. Balarāma, the son of Rohiṇī, perceived him rushing at him without a chariot. He too left his chariot on the battle-field and dashed at him on foot.

46. As all beings were witnessing it, Māgadha (Jarāsandha) overwhelmed with wrath, brandished his heavy mace made of hard iron, and attacking Balarāma, struck him down with the mace and roared.

47. Perceiving the on-coming mace hard as a rock striking against his chest, Balarāma caught hold of it by his left hand, O scion of the Kuru race !

48. Hurling aside the mace, he hit a blow with his fist Jarāsandha on his chest. The mighty son of Rohiṇī caught the powerful Jarāsandha in his arms.

49. Entwining between his legs the stomach of Jarāsandha, he held his neck under his arm-pit, whereupon both of them rolled on the ground.

50. While they were falling, Balarāma was on Jarāsandha O King. But within a moment, Jarāsandha of immense power brought him under him.

51. Both of the heroes, with their eyes red with anger, stood up and again caught hold of each other like two terrific elephants maddened with excuding ichor.

52. Those extremely enraged ferocious warriors intent on killing each other, dashed their chests against each other, and tried to drag (each other on the battle field).

53. Thus dragging each other in an area of ten thousand bows, they reduced to powder the trees and rocks that were in the vicinity, O King!

54. Jarāsandha the highly proud hero, disengaged himself and picked up his mace. Even the most powerful Balarāma of incomprehensible nature, stood up and taking his pestle in a moment began to strike him with it.

55. In that combat Balarāma struck Jarāsandha with his pestle, on his head, in between his chest and shoulders, on the shoulders, arms, navel thighs, knees, stomach and chest, many times.

56. The proud Magadha king hit hard Balarāma on the chest, neck, mouth, forehead, chin, shoulder, navel, hips as well as his sides simultaneously.

57. While Balarāma and Jarāsandha were striking down each other in the combat, the kings became nervous about fighting and were extremely troubled.

58. Thinking that the king of Magadhas was approaching death, they gradually lost their heart and became less inclined to fight.

59. Extremely powerful Sātyaki who was fighting Kumbhāṇḍa was pierced with three arrows by the minister of Bāṇa, in the battle.

60. The mighty-armed Sātyaki, being extremely hurt, heaved heavy breaths like an angry serpent. In order to kill Kumbhāṇḍa in the fight, he took five iron arrows.

61. Then a great uproar arose in the army of the Daitya minister, when Sātyaki of powerful arms, pulled the string to his ears and hit Kumbhāṇḍa, the minister of Bāṇa, in his navel, throat, forehead, chest and crown, O tiger in the Kuru race.

62-63. Thus pierced with the arrows, Kumbhāṇḍa fell down unconscious on his seat in the chariot. Seeing that he had lost his consciousness, the charioteer, grieved at heart, immediately carried him away from the battle in his chariot, O prominent Bharata !

64. Perceiving that Kumbhāṇḍa had left and was in the peril of life, Kūpakarṇa, the demon whom Kṛtavarmā engaged, left Kṛtavarmā and departed from the battle-field.

65. Both the demons left the battle-field without taking leave of the king of Magadhas, even though they were not relieved by him. Accompanied by their remaining army, both the daityas returned to Śoṇitapura by the same way they came.

## CHAPTER FIFTY-III

(*Ch.* 52 *in VJ's text*) ; *Conquest of Karvirapura*)

*Śrī Śuka said*:

1. Finding that the army of Bāṇa had deserted them and they themselves were extremely troubled by the volleys of

weapons (from the Yādavas), the princes became dispirited, O excellent king !

2. Seeing that the dānava army had already departed, and the hostile princes were exhausted, and Kṛṣṇa was fighting on, Balarāma felt that his strength had increased.

3. In that combat, he caught hold of the lock of hair on Jarāsandha's head by his left hand and wanted to strike him on his head with his pestle.

4. At that moment, Balarāma heard a clear distinct incorporeal voice, loud like thundering clouds in the sky: "O Balarāma, Jarāsandha is not to be killed by you. Happily return from the battle."

5. Hearing that voice from the heaven, the mighty Balarāma left him and riding his chariot returned from the battle-field, praised highly by multitudes of Brāhmaṇa sages, Siddhas, bards and songsters.

6. Now Jarāsandha, the foster son of Jarā, hanging down his head and accompanied by kings who were defeated in the battle and surrounded with a small force that was left after being killed in the battle, retired from the fight and proceeded to his capital.

*Śri Śuka said* :

7. Lord Kṛṣṇa of great splendour, covered the inimical forces with volleys of arrows and put to flight those kings, killing a majority of them in the battle.

8. He was followed by songsters and bards like Sūta, Māgadha and Bandins who were highly pleased with him, and were singing of his glory and by highly learned Brāhmaṇas who were loudly singing his panegyric.

9-12. Followed by these, the glorious Lord entered the city of Mathurā which was populated with citizens who were delighted and happy—a city with high walls of fortifications and lofty arched gates, decorated with flowing banners and with lighted lamps. As he entered by the royal road, he shone beautiful, showered over with flowers and with fried grains with folded palms by ladies occupying the tops of mansions. The citizens of Mathura who were eager to please them, presented to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the descendants of Madhu,

highly precious presents, excellent garlands, of flowers and ointments. Kṛṣṇa the prominent one among Yādavas, in this way passed by the royal road.

13-15. Entering the spacious assembly hall and occupying the excellent seat, the hero Kṛṣṇa, along with Balarāma and intelligent Sātyaki, was honoured by Yadus and Brāhmaṇas like Indra by gods in the heaven. Holding consultations with the intelligent statesmen and noble-souled old Yadus such as Ugrasena, Uddhava, Akrūra (to mention the prominent ones) who were present there, Lord Kṛṣṇa was allowed to go with Balarāma as his companion and helpmate.

16. Being desirous of seeing Gomanta, the best of mountains, and the great fortress at its top, both of them set out in the morning from Mathura and proceeded to the South.

17. The glorious Lord Hari accompanied by Balarāma crossed the Yamunā and passed through many countries, mountains, rivers and hills.

18-20. While passing by the way, they saw on a raised part of a forest an extra-ordinarily distinguished sage sitting at the root of a tree. The sage had a mass of matted hair on his head. He was clad in bark garments and the hide of a deer and had a *Kamaṇḍalu* (a water pot of a gourd) by his side. He was glorious like the Sun in lustre. He subsisted on spiritual knowledge and bliss and was surrounded with hundreds of disciples. Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, the protectors of the world, were extremely glad to see him.

21. Both the heroes with due formality and alertness paid their respects to him. The glorious lord Kṛṣṇa spoke to the prominent sage as follows :

22. "I bow to you O Paraśurāma of the Bhārgava clan ! O glorious son of Jamadagni who regard penance as wealth ! We are known as Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa. Has our name ever reached your ears ?"

23. Bhārgava who was thus addressed by Vāsudeva gazed at the two descendants of Madhu (just to probe their spiritual nature). The noble Paraśurāma with his eyes blooming with affection spoke as follows :

24. "Welcome to you the best one among the Yadus

and to your noble-souled elder brother ! I know that you are the supra-sensuous Lord who are born in the Yadu clan.

25. You are the primary cause of all the effects (created things). You are the ancient-most person in this Universe. Salutations to you, O lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, the sole cause of all the worlds.

26. For what purpose are both of you whom the universe pays respects, have arrived here ?" When thus inquired by Paraśurāma, the son of Jamadagni, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa spoke out.

27. "We desire to see Gomanta for the inaccessible fortress on its top, O powerful lord !" Hearing that, Paraśurāma, the son of Jamadagni, spoke to Kṛṣṇa.

28. "May it be so, O mighty-armed one ! You may go with your elder brother to Gomanta. At the foot of that hill, there is the city of Karavīra protected by Śṛgāla Vāsudeva, but he will not tolerate you (encroaching). After killing him in a battle, you can occupy the mount called Gomanta".

30. Thus instructed by Paraśurāma, the son of Jamadagni, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, the descendants of Madhu, took leave of the omniscient sage and proceeded to the southern direction. Both of them saw the mount Gomanta covered over with sky-scraping, big trees.

32. They also saw at its foot the city of Karavīra with high portals, ramparts varied in construction and wonderful mensions, palaces and towers.

33. Kṛṣṇa, the wielder of conch, discus and a mace loudly blew his conch. Hearing that blast of Kṛṣṇa's conch, Śṛgāla Vāsudeva became overwhelmed with rage and taking with him his massive army of the infantry, the cavalry, the chariots and the elephant corps, he attacked Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, the delight of Yadus.

35. He as if completely covered those Mādhava brothers with a flood of (discharged) arrows. Seeing that formidable army, the two most prominent Yādava heroes fought with them on foot, in the battle, and made that army extremely agitated and troubled by volleys of arrows and threw it into confusion.

37. On seeing that, king Śṛgāla, full of rage, rushed against them both. Observing him approaching in his chariot with a bow in his hand, Lord Vāsudeva checked his progress just as the coast-line does to the flow-tide of the sea.

38. Both the mighty Vāsudevas who were extremely enraged fought with each other with the intention of finishing with the enemy.

39. As the fight proceeded that way, Lord Govinda in a moment cut off the head of Śṛgāla Vāsudeva along with its refulgent crown.

40. Seeing that their master was killed, the soldiers of his army who were still left alive, ran in all directions.

41. Thereupon, both Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa entered the big city of Karavīra.[1] Both of them were worshipped as their dear lords by Brāhmaṇas and merchants.

42. Under the guard of his soldiers, Kṛṣṇa arranged to send Śṛgāla Vāsudeva's elephants, horses, chariots, soldiers, treasures and wealth.[2]

## CHAPTER FIFTY-IV

*Kṛṣṇa Crowned : Jarāsandha's Defeat*

*Śrī Śuka said :*

1-4. Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa ascended the prominent mountain Gomanta which was covered with lofty trees and creepers. It was thickly overgrown with Sāla, Tāla (palmyra), and Tamāla trees and was beautified with Priyāla and Aśoka trees. It was enriched with Kadamba, Nimba (Neema), Hintāla, Pūga, Punnāga trees. It appeared beautiful with groves of plantain trees and was resonant with cooing of joy-

1. Most probably Kolhapur in the Bombay State. But if Gomanta is Goa, the distance between the two renders the suggestions doubtful, unless the fort of Panhāla is identified with the Gomanta hill.

2. Here ends C. 52 of VJ.'s Text.

ful cuckoos. The trees thereof were shaken a bit by the swarms of humming bees and jumping monkeys. It appeared beautiful with palm trees the branches of which were binding down with the burden of their fruits. It was watered with a number of cataracts. It abounded in crystal water and cool dense shadows. They saw and enjoyed that beautiful landscape.

5. On the mountain, they went up the peak called Pravarṣaṇa where clouds always sent forth their showers without break.

6. Ascending that peak, those two great Yadus surveyed all directions. Enjoying themselves they lived on the best of the mountain, to their hearts' content.

7-8* In the meanwhile, in the milky ocean the best among oceans which is the abode of the God of gods, Viṣṇu, the wielder of conch, discus and a mace, the glorious mighty-armed Bali, the son of Virocana who visited it, took away the crown of the God of gods which was studded with costly jewels.

9. The crown was wonderfully wrought in a thousand rich sapphires (*Indranīla* stones) and was studded with hundred of precious *Gomeda* stones. It was shining with rubies, big blue precious stones and pearls.

10. It was richly set with *Puṣparāga* (a kind of precious stone) and corals. It was made of celestial gold. Having come to know that the diadem was taken away by the Dānava hero, Garuḍa, the king of birds, and the incharge protector of the city, instantly pursued him.

11. Overtaking the irresistible king of Dānavas on the way and putting up a terrible fight with him, he vanquished the prominent demon.

12. Taking away from him the crown, a veritable heap of jewels, which was brilliant like the Sun, he (Garuḍa) on his way back saw lord Hari, the son of Devakī.

8*. It is hard to believe that the great king Bali who donated his kingdom of three worlds to Viṣṇu in the form of a dwarf (Vāmana) could be tempted to steal the crown of Lord Viṣṇu whose greatest devotee he was.

13. He was sitting along with his elder brother on the beautiful and the best of mountains known as Gomanta. He immediately placed on his head that heavenly ornament — Viṣṇu's crown. Bowing down to his feet with his own head, he began to sing his praise.

*Garuḍa said* :

14. "I salute again and again lord Nārāyaṇa who has assumed a human form for some special mission, and who is extremely dear to all. My salutations to Nārāyaṇa who is the cause of the destruction of the enemies of gods and (as Inner Controller) is witness to the actions of everyone.

15. Being yourself the same Nārāyaṇa, you assume the form of god Brahmā and create all the Universe. As Nārāyaṇa, you protect it and ultimately assuming the form of Śiva (as his *ātman*) you destroy it, O glorious Lord.

16. I know that you are that god Viṣṇu, the Lord of all gods—who have incarnated on the earth as the scion of the Yadu race. I am Garuḍa, the son of Vinatā, your humble servant. O Lord ! Be pleased to command me what I should do."

*Śrī Śuka said* :

17. Addressing the God of gods thus, Garuḍa, the king of birds, knelt before him on the ground, bowed him and stood before him with folded palms.

18. Seeing Garuḍa the prominent one among birds, Kṛṣṇa the greatest of Yādavas, with his countenance blooming with affection, touched his head (the best part of the body) with hands.

19. "You may go wherever you like, O blessed one. Come in time when you will be remembered by me." Commanding him thus, he discharged him. Balarāma and Keśava, the lords of the world, who subsisted on the fruits and roots and drank of waters from flowing streams, descended from the top of that mountain and arrived at Karavīrapura.

21. Having stayed there for four months both of them returned to the city of Mathurā taking with them a big army, O prominent one among Bharatas.

22. Hearing that king Śṛgāla was killed, Jarāsandha became overwhelmed with anger and surrounded with a vast army, he also came there, O great Kuru !

23. Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa battled with him for seven days. In that seven-day-war the king of Magadha with his enormous army was completely defeated.

24. He returned to the country of Magadha along with a number of Kṣatriyas. Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa who were expert in *Dharma*, entered the city of Mathurā along with their followers, while they were being praised by songsters and bards like Sūta and Māgadha.

(After this see Verse No. 42 in Ch. 50)

## CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO—I

(After 56 in V.J.'s Text)

### *Kṛtavarmā Deputed to Hastināpura*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1-2. On one occasion Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, in company of Balarāma and Sātyaki was being waited upon by kings of various countries in the royal assembly. He heard there from Brāhmaṇas, participants in a sacrificial session that Drupada, the king of Pāñcālas was taken captive by young sons of Kuntī in the battle, O scion of Kuru race.

3. On hearing that, the Imperishable Lord became glad at heart and deputed Kṛtavarmā to the city of Hastināpura to know the details.

4. On going to Hastināpura, Kṛtavarmā sought the audience of Bhīṣma, the aged grand-father of Kauravas accompanied by Droṇa, Vidura, Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Kṛpa.

5. He paid respects to king Yudhiṣṭhira along with his four brothers. Kṛtavarmā, the son of Hṛdika, paid special respects to Kuntī.

6-7. Yudhiṣṭhira on his part inquired about Kṛṣṇa, the slayer of Kaṁsa, as well as about his companions, about the

killing of Kālayavana and victory over Jarāsandha, and the slaying of Vāsudeva, the uler of Karavīrapura as well as the building up of the city of Dvārakā in the sea.

8-10. On knowing the facts (about the above events) and the slaying of Haṁsa and Ḍibhaka and Brahmadatta the invincible, Yudhiṣṭhira regarded that the sovereignty of the three worlds had permanently been secured in his hands. Kṛtavarmā was honoured by providing comforts, engagement in conversations and other ways of receiving the guest, by the sons of Pāṇḍu and by Kuntī whose eyes were overflowing with tears of affection. Kṛtavarmā took leave of his relatives and also of Kuntī.

11-12. He duly paid respects to the sons of his maternal aunt who were knowers of *Dharma*. He was permitted to leave by Bhīṣma, the son of Gaṅgā and by Dhṛtarāṣṭra, O sinless king ! He was also given leave by Vidura, Karṇa, the king of Aṅga, Droṇa, Kṛpa, by the intelligent Aśvatthāman as well as by Duryodhana.

13. Taking leave of them all, Kṛtavarmā departed from the city called Hastināpura and at the time of sunset, he arrived at Dvārakā, the head-quarters of Vṛṣṇis.

14. Entering the celestial assembly-hall which was attended by a number of kings he saw there Kṛṣṇa who was occupying a high seat of gold.

15. To Kṛṣṇa who was wearing a Vanamālā and who was being fanned with *chowries* by many servants, he reported in details everything as he saw or heard it.

16. Hearing the detailed report of what happened in the capital city Hastināpura of the Kauravas, Lord Hari, the Ruler of the world, learning of the valorous deed of the sons of Pāṇḍus became overwhelmed with joy.

## CHAPTER FIFTYTWO-II

*Balarāma marries Revatī**

*King Parikṣit said* :

1. O great sage ! I wish to hear from you in details who was the king named Revata and how he was instructed by god Brahmā (to give his daughter in marriage to Balarāma).

*Śri Śuka replied* :

2. Formerly (in the *Kṛta* Age), there was a king called Revata. He was expert in the essentials of *dharma* and *artha*. A glorious daughter was born to him whom he named Revatī.

3. He went to god Brahmā to consult him to whom he should give his daughter, as she was sought after by kings of various countries even though he did not propose her to anybody.

4. At that time in the assembly-hall of god Brahmā, two Gandharvas, Hāhā and Hūhū, were singing. They were experts in all the subtle excellent points in evolving music (such as presentation of the gamut in proper pitch and according to measured beats.

5. The king waited outside for some time expecting some interval in the musical concert. When it was concluded, he paid his respects to god Brahmā and sought his advice.

6. "O glorious Lord ! This is my daughter. To whom I should give her in marriage ?" To him the lotus-born god Brahmā asked, "What prince you like most ?

7. Name to me all other rulers of the earth as well, O scion of the Kuru race !" Thereupon Revata enumerated to him the names of kings who were ruling over various countries.

8. Hearing the names of those kings, Brahmā laughed aloud and spoke to Revata, "O king ; Many *yugas* have elapsed since you came here,

9. While you were listening to the musical performance of these Gandharvas (which you are not eligible to hear) for a

* To be read after verse 15 of ch. 52 (original).
It appears to be an elaboration of *supra* 9.27-36.

moment. Where are those kings whom you regard suitable for your daughter, O king?

10. By this time, O tiger among kings, there are born two lords of the world in the house of Vasudeva. Those two descendants of the Yadu race are called Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa.

11. O king ! Give your daughter in marriage to Balarāma out of them." When he was thus advised, the king paid obeisance to him and returned to his city.

12. He gave his beautiful daughter to Balarāma of mighty arms. But being born in the first (*Kṛta*) Age, she was of a big stature. Balarāma of powerful arms laid his plough on her shoulder and pulling her down made her of his equal stature.

## CHAPTER FIFTY-FIVE

(VJ's Text — Chapter-68)

*The Story of Pradyumna's Birth*

The following are the additional introductory verses in VJ.'s Text :

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1-2. Having propitiated Śiva, the God of gods, the bestower of blessings on the world and having pleased the god residing on mount Kailāsa, with his penance, Lord Hari got a son from Rukmiṇī called Pradyumna. The hero was endowed with excellent beauty, generosity and other virtues. He was the god of Love (Kāma) re-incarnated after being burnt (by god Śiva).

*The King Parikṣit said* :

3. Be pleased to narrate to me what sort of son and of what name, Hari got after visualising god Śiva with the object of getting a son, and after securing the requisite boon.

## CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE—I

(VJ.'s Text—Ch. 65)

*The Pārijāta Tree Taken by Śrī Kṛṣṇa*

*Śrī Śuka said* :

1. Having slain the extremely formidable demon Narakāsura, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the exterminator of *dānavas*, mounted Garuḍa and set out of Prāgjyotiṣapura, O King.

2. While flying through the sky with his consort Satyabhāmā, Lord Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa) went to the capital of heaven to pay respects to Aditi, the mother of gods.

3. Arriving at the gates of heaven, god Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa) blew his highly resounding conch of great sound. Hearing that blast, the denizens of heaven approached to receive him with respectful offerings (e. g. water for washing feet and other articles of worship).

4. Worshipped by gods with devotion and humility and with their minds free from mental distress and fear, He entered the beautiful celestial palace of the Lord of gods.

5. There, Indra with his queen Śacī worshipped him presenting him jewels, celestial ornaments and clothes, perfumes and beautiful garlands.

6. Thereupon he proceeded with his spouse to the city of his mother Aditi. Noticing that her son Acyuta was coming, she received him.

7. Hari paid respects to her. With deep affection, she received with blessings the best of Yadus whom she had not seen for a long time.

8. Instructed by Kṛṣṇa, Satyabhāmā also, placed the earrings (of Aditi) at the feet of her mother-in-law and bowed down to her, O descendant of Kurus.

9. Having recovered her ear-rings she was deeply satisfied and hugged her daughter-in-law. With her eyes overflowing with tears of joy, Aditi, the beloved spouse of sage Kāśyapa, exclaimed :

10. There shall never be old age, deformity or discord with your beloved in your case through my gracious blessings. Positively rest assured, O auspicious lady !

11. Having taken their leave of the goddess Aditi and also of celestials, Keśava (Kṛṣṇa) accompanied with Satyabhāmā mounted Garuḍa and proceeded onwards.

12. While the god (Kṛṣṇa) and the goddess (Satyabhāmā) were being borne by the high-souled mighty Garuḍa, they beheld a wonderful garden sending forth excellently sweet scent. It was the Nandana garden so beloved to Indra, the husband of Śacī and hence well-guarded.

13. Noticing that garden full of divine fragrance and rich in blossoms, Satyabhāmā took Kṛṣṇa by hand and said, "O Keśava, I wish to enter into this wonderful garden and to indulge in sports for a while.

14. To respect her words (of request), Keśava got down from Garuḍa and entered the garden that was guarded by servants of Indra.

15. She saw there the heavenly trees resonant with the humming of intoxicated bees, bent down with the weight of fruits and thickly over-strewn with pollen dust of flowers.

16-17. The tender foliage of the trees was moving in gentle breeze and was rendered beautiful and attractive with sweet warbling birds. While sauntering therein, she happened to see the great Pārijāta tree. With her eyes full of wonder and curiosity, she asked Lord Kṛṣṇa, "What is the name of this tree ? It is really wonderful in all the three worlds."

18-20 The enjoyers of the fruits of this tree must be really lucky as they have all their desires fulfilled thereby. The space at its foot (roots) is paved with corals, its huge trunk is all gold ; it is covered with tender leaves of sapphires and platform round it is built of shining *Vaidūryas* (Lapis Lazuli). It blossoms forth in ruby-flowers and is laden with ripe fruits in the form of gomeda stones. It is shining with the flower-filaments of diamonds. It is beautified with hundreds of big branches of lustrous emeralds.

21. This tree has fascinated my heart thoroughly. If I am really loved by you, the tree should be taken away to our city (Dvārakā), O Lord of the world !

22. Seeing me sitting (resting) under the shade of this tree, your other queens would look upon me as your beloved-must spouse of all, O sinless Lord !"

23. When urged thus by his beloved consort Satyabhāmā, Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, explained : "This tree is not to be removed from the Nandana garden, O gracious lady.

24. Formerly when this tree emerged while the milky ocean was being churned by gods and Asuras, this was given to Indra by all who participated all the fruits (or "jewels" evolved out of the churning of the ocean).

25. It is not proper for me to take this jewel of a tree away, setting at nought my friend Indra, the performer of hundred *Kratus*, O lotus-eyed lady, as I always follow the path of righteousness.

26. If an attempt for taking away this Pārijāta is made, a terrible fight with gods ambitious to gain victory is inevitable, O smiling beauty (lit. lady beaming with smiles) !"

27. When Satyabhāmā was thus addressed by the God of gods, Satyabhāmā retorted to Lord Hari, "Why do you frighten me with such deceptive arguments, O slayer of Kaṁsa ?

28. That unmannerly Śacī did not courteously receive me and honour me when I visited her. She is proud of her husband's prowess.

29. O Acyuta ! If I am really your beloved, this Pārijāta tree must be taken away at any cost. If I be not so (beloved), desist (from the attempt) immediately."

30. Thus importuned by Satyabhāmā, Kṛṣṇa ignored contemptuously the guards, uprooted the tree and placed it on Garuḍa.

31. The forest-guards then resisted Kṛṣṇa while some sped hastily to report to Indra the incident.

32. (They insistently protested) : "O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, this tree is worshipped by celestials. This must not be taken away. If you (just try to) take it away, you will instantly reap the fruit of that act.

33. You will never reach your capital with this tree, O Kṛṣṇa. You will find Indra (pursuing you) close at your back with his weapon (Vajra) raised (to strike you)."

34. Some forest guards quickly approached Indra who was sitting with his queen Śacī. Seeing him they reported, O King !

35. "Disregarding all gods including (Her majesty) Indrāṇī as well as your majesty, Kṛṣṇa's spouse has taken away the great tree Pārijāta.

36. While resisting her we prohibited her in clear terms. But that beloved spouse of Hari is so elated with the pride of her husband's prowess that she reproached us and carried away the tree."

*Śrī Śuka continued* :

37. Hearing this offensive report, god Indra looked at Śacī who was sitting by his side and like a serpent hit with a stick, did not tolerate that insult.

38. Proclaiming immediate preparation for fighting and mobilising all his soldiers and summoning the guardians of various spheres for the battle, the Lord of gods marched out.

39. The army of gods followed Indra equipped with thunder-bolt and riding the excellent elephant Airāvata of four tusks.

40. The fire-god, securely accoutred in his panoply and riding his horse, armed himself with a terrific Śataghnī and a tail-like ladle, rode to the battle.

41. The valorous Yama (god of death) armed himself with his rod and riding his he-buffalo and accompanied with mahā-Kāla and others followed Indra with a view to fight.

42. Nirṛti of great splendour rode in his man-borne vehicle. The mighty-armed god, armed with a sword, set out for the battle, O King.

43. Varuṇa hastily mounted his alligator of terrible forms and with his noose raised in his hand started after Indra to fight.

44. The wind-god clad in coat of mail and armed with a *Tomara* (Javelin) rode his (swift) black-antelope and followed the Lord of gods to fight with Kṛṣṇa, the wielder of (Sudarśana) discus.

45. Kubera, in his palanquin carried by four men and armed with a *Mudgara* (a club) rushed out hastily with a desire to fight with Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa).

46. God Śiva, mounting his big bull and bearing a

sharp pointed trident and accompanied with an army of ten million goblins went with Indra for fighting.

47. Drums, conchs, *Mṛdaṅgas*, *Paṇavas*, Kettle-drums and *gomukhas* (a musical instrument), heavenly gold wind-instruments and innumerable cymbals were sounded.

48. With the thumping of iron tyres of chariot, harsh neighing of the horses, roaring like lions and loud striking of their arms, loud shouts of challenges for fighting.

49. And with hundreds and thousands of gods shouting, "Halt, stop : Where do you go ? Don't go."

50. Brandishing and waving their mass of arms and urging on their vehicles (for speed), hundreds and thousands of the gods were competing to be in advance.

51. With terrific twanging of the bow-strings and innumerable lusty shouts like lions, the impatient gods rushed forward to attack (Kṛṣṇa) as (a pack of) jackals rushing against a lion.

## CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE

*(VI. 's Text Ch.* 66)

*Satyabhāmā defeats Gods.*

*Śrī Śuka continued* :

1. Perceiving that gods are rushing forward to attack them, Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the world, remarked to Satyabhāmā, "Here have arrived your guests, these gods".

2. While the Lord of gods was speaking thus, the warrior-gods despatched (against Kṛṣṇa) roared and discharged a volley of arrows on Kṛṣṇa, O descendant of Kurus.

3. Then, confused at the sudden calamity, Satyabhāmā took up the Śārṅga bow and with a volley of arrows cut off the shafts discharged by the warriors from heaven.

4. Thereafter advanced Kubera the Lord of wealth, surrounded by a number of Yakṣas and twanging the string of his palm-tree high bow plated with gold at both ends.

5. Discharging arrows with feathers of gold and now and then roaring like a lion, he rushed forward in the battle and shouted, "Stop, Stop."

6. Satyā (Satyabhāmā) hit forcibly his big belly with five sharp arrows that cut him to the quick, O King.

7. Being deeply wounded by her arrows in the battle, the god of wealth discharged three *bhalla* arrows at the beloved of Lord Hari and gave out a lusty shout.

8-9. Even before those shafts could reach her, she cut them with three arrows with crescent-shaped head. And the queen (Satyā) struck the forehead of Kubera, the Lord of Guhyakas, with eight *Vatsa-danta* (type of) arrows swift like the mind, O prominent Kuru. Extremely pained with those arrows, Kubera, the son of Pulastya, was over-whelmed with rage.

10-13. In that combat, he discharged twenty-one sharp arrows but Satyabhāmā, with her seven shafts, cut each of them into three pieces within half a second (wink of the eye). While they were in the air, Satyabhāmā, the beloved of Hari, flew into rage and cut into two the big bow of Kubera at its hold (in the middle) with an arrow with crescent-shaped head. Kubera, the Lord of riches picked up another bow and stringing it, discharged a volley of arrows, wrathfully breathing like a serpent. But queen Satyabhāmā with ease (as in a sport) cut down all those arrows with her *Sannataparva* shafts (of hard knots). It was a miracle as it were to see. Kubera, thereupon, wrathfully glared at Satyabhāmā.

15-16. "Look at my prowess I shall kill you outright today", growled he. With a desire to wipe out his defeat and humiliation and while all gods were gazing, he fixed an excellent arrow with a crescent-head on his bow tall as a palmyra tree, to kill queen Satyabhāmā.

17. Anticipating his plan (in mind), the consort of Hari cut his bow just in the middle (at its hold), with an arrow with a horse-shoe shaped sharp head, O best of Kurus.

18. Then Kubera, the protector of wealth took up his

formidable *Mudgara* (club) that terrified demons and brandishing it hundred times, hurled it at the queen (Satyā).

19. Kṛṣṇa with his left hand (easily) caught hold of that extremely terrible club as it was rushing towards her and seeing at him laughed loudly.

20. Thereupon, Kubera, the Lord of wealth retired from the battle and fled away. Kṛṣṇa spoke highly of his queen, embraced her with great regard.

21. When Kubera took to his heels in the battle with Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Kaṁsa, Varuṇa raising his noose attacked Kṛṣṇa in a combat.

22. Perceiving the advance of Varuṇa who rode a crocodile, Garuḍa of formidable strength pounced upon him like a tiger springing on an ox.

23. Terrific was the fight between Garuḍa and Varuṇa, like the combat between Bali and Indra in the war between gods and demons.

24. Varuṇa, the Lord of waters, threw the noose about the neck of Garuḍa and angrily dragged him like one lion dragging another.

25. Lifting up Varuṇa, the Lord of waters with the ends of his wings and catching hold of the crocodile in his claws Garuḍa hurled them into the sea.

26. Having lost his mount and catching hold of his noose with great difficulty, Varuṇa ran away on foot from the battle-field to his abode whence he came.

27. When Varuṇa retired from the battle-field, the Wind-god and the Fire-god jointly attacked Kṛṣṇa, O the best of Kurus !

28. The Fire-god discharged five arrows, while the Wind-god fired three shafts. Their fight with Kṛṣṇa was wonderful to look at.

29. Thereupon, Govinda, exterminator of enemies, laughed loudly and pierced the Fire-god with one arrow and the Wind-god with seven.

30. Deeply and forcibly struck on the chest with one shaft with horse-shoe-shaped head, the Fire-god realized that Kṛṣṇa was extraordinary and quickly fled from the battle-field.

31. Noticing that the Fire-god had run away from the battle and that his whole body was bristling with arrows, he (the Wind-god) was overwhelmed with pain.

32. He realized that it was lotus-eyed god Viṣṇu who had appeared on the battle-field. He retired from the battle as he wanted to save his own life.

33. Thereupon mounting his he-buffalo and raising up his refulgent rod, Yama, with his eyes reddened with rage, attacked Kṛṣṇa in the battle.

34. Noticing Yama with his big rod raised up (to strike at him,) the lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa hurled his mace at him and felled it from his hand.

35. The heavy blow of his mace on his rod made Yama's hand tremble. Turning his back, the god of death ran away with his buffalo, O scion of the Kuru race.

36. Beholding the discomfiture and retreat of Yama, Nirṛti was overwhelmed with fear and judging his power, did not come to fight.

37. But god Śiva of great heroic lustre, armed with a trident and mounting his bull, attacked Kṛṣṇa with his enormous army of goblins.

38. Those two mighty valorous heroes well-known in the world engaged in a terrible combat, each with an ambition to defeat the other.

39. Piercing Kṛṣṇa with ten arrows and Garuḍa with five, Śiva roared out in the battle, Stop, Stop.

40. Taking up his Śārṅga bow, Kṛṣṇa, the destroyer of cities of enemies, hit Śiva, the rider of the bull with thirty arrows simultaneously.

41. In that combat, Garuḍa, the destroyer of serpents, harassed the bull with his pointed bill, both of his claws and wings.

42. Discharging again fifty Nārāca arrows at him, Kṛṣṇa engaged Śaṅkara, the benign god who blesses the world, in the fight, O ruler of the world.

43. Śiva, got enraged and brandishing his sharp-pointed formidable-looking trident hurled it at Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa), O King.

44. Noticing the trident rushing at him, Kṛṣṇa hurled his heavy demon-destroying mace Kaumodakī at it, to ward it off.

45. It is traditionally reported that both the weapons --- the Kaumodakī mace and the trident — buffeted each other in the sky and giving out huge flames both of them simultaneously fell into the sea.

46. Felling down the trident into the sea, the mace Kaumodakī returned to Viṣṇu's (Kṛṣṇa's) hand and the trident also to that of Śiva.

47. The serpent decorated god Śiva raised up his sharp sword and spurring his bull with his heals, he attacked Kṛṣṇa in the combat.

48. Promptly seizing the bull by his two horns, Garuḍa hurled god Śiva along with the bull to a distance of hundred bows (four hundred cubits).

49. Thereupon god Śiva, the wielder of trident with the bull as his mount, left the battle and speedily went back to his pce, O best of Kurus !

## CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE—III

(VI.'s Text — Chapter No. 67)

*Pārijāta planted in Satyabhāmā's Palace*

*Śri Śuka continued* :

1-2. Thereupon Indra, the King of gods put on his royal diadem, equipped himself with a quiver of arrows, armed himself with a bow, mounted on his huge elephant Airāvata and remembering the words of Śacī regarding the Pārijāta tree, attacked Kṛṣṇa in the battle, like an elephant attacking a lion.

3. Beholding him advance, Lord Hari, the conqueror of inimical cities, blew his high sounding conch filling all the quarters with the blast.

4. Attacking Kṛṣṇa and twanging his big bow, he hit Kṛṣṇa with an extremely pointed arrow with a sharp horse-shoe-shaped head in the combat.

5. Wounded on the chest with that *Kṣurapra* arrow by the King of gods, Hari laughed loudly and applauded him, "Welldone Indra ! This is just like you (worthy of the King of gods.

6. Still again the King of gods set ten shafts on his bow (long and curved) like a great serpent and stretching the bow-string upto his ears, discharged them at Kṛṣṇa and his discus and roared like a lion.

7. In the meanwhile, Kṛṣṇa the noble-souled slayer of Kaṁsa cut into three all the arrows with one shaft in the mid-way (as they were coming), and hit Indra with ten excellently whetted shafts as if in a sport, O descendant of Bharata.

8. Those shafts pierced through Indra's body alongwith the armour and were seen coming out with great force smeared with blood.

9. Indra again set sixteen arrows on his bow and stretching (the bow string) discharged them, but Kṛṣṇa cut them with three shafts.

10. Still again with thirty shafts, Hari hit the King of gods in the battle and all those arrows struck deep in Indra's chest.

11. Indra then flew in rage like a serpent hit with a stick and with his goad he impelled his big elephant to attack Garuḍa.

12. Goaded on by Indra the elephant approached Garuḍa and dashed at his chest with his four tusks.

13. Thereupon, Garuḍa tormented the elephant called Airāvata with his bill, wings and claws, O descendant of Kauravas.

14. And while all beings were agazing, he raised his terrible Vajra which inspired awe among Dānavas and hurled it at Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa).

15. As that *Vajra*, the weapon of Indra, reached him, Viṣṇu, the slayer of Madhu caught it in his left hand and laughed loudly.

16. Being deprived of his weapon and his mount (elephant) tormented by Garuḍa, the King of gods retreated from the battle-field hanging down his head in shame.

17. Finding Indra frustrated in his object and intend-

ing to run, Satyabhāmā laughed loudly at the King of gods and said taunting.

*Satyabhāmā said* :

18. Come on Śakra. Don't retreat, O wielder of the thunderbolt. It is not proper for Śacī's dear lord to take to flight.

19. Your queen Śacī, the daughter of Pulomā, drunk with the pride of sovereignty and elated with the prowess of her husband as she is, will at once think low of you (and insult you) defeated as you are in the battle."

20. Hearing this taunting speech of queen Satyabhāmā, Indra looked her in the face and addressed to the slyly smiling queen.

*Indra said* :

21. Confronting on the battle-field the father and preceptor of the three worlds by whom are brought forth the gods, demons, the great serpents, Yakṣas, Siddhas, Gandharvas (the divine musicians), Kinnaras, goblins, ogres and others, who can avoid facing the humiliation of defeat ?

22. We who subsist on sacrificial oblations, expose our childishness by opposing the incomprehensible Lord, like the weakling of a calf appears to oppose its mother at the time of sucking her milk."

23. Having replied thus to Satyabhāmā, the daughter of Satrājit, Indra folded his palms, bowed to Lord Vāsudeva and prayed, O the best descendant of Bharata !

*Indra prayed* :

24. Hail to you O God of gods, the lotus-eyed Lord of Lakṣmī ! Be pleased to pardon me all my faults, O protector of the world.

25. You are kind and affectionate to those who seek resort to you. It does not behove you to abandon me of whom you are the sole asylum—me who am extremely foolish and uncontrolled.

26-27. The elephant Airāvata (my mount), the thunderbolt (my special weapon), this Pārijāta tree, sovereignty over gods and this Amarāvatī (my capital town)—in fact everything

(in this universe) is under your control. I am your obedient servant. Whatever you wish to take away from this place may be taken away by you at will.

28. O Govinda ! I shall explain to you the fundamental reason of opposing you. You are now wholeheartedly interested in the mortal world.

29. If this wish-yielding tree Pārijāta is taken by you there, the earth becomes indistinguishable from the heavan.

30. It is hence that I opposed you, O tiger among the Yadus—O god, I may, therefore, be forgiven by you who know what should and what should not be done.

*Śri Śuka said* :

31. Thus addressed by the king of gods, Janārdana, the the God of gods, with a smiling countenance, spoke to him, O the greatest Kuru.

*The glorious Lord said* :

32. "Absolutely no fault has been committed by you, O Indra. If any fault has been committed, it is mine, for there is no distinction between you and me.

33. Whatever is now done by you, irrespective of its being good or bad, has been committed by me, O thousand eyed god. Please do not brood over the matter at all.

34. This excellent-most Pārijāta tree will, as per my direction, come to the Nandana garden of its own accord, when I (departing from the earth) ascend to the heaven.

35. When the King of gods was thus addressed by Vāsudeva, O best of Kurus, the king of gods apologised to Kṛṣṇa, Satyabhāmā and Garuḍa.

36-37. May my son and your brother-in-law Arjuna, also known as Bībhatsu, be protected by you." Repeating this request again and again, Indra, getting leave to depart, got back his Vajra and returned to his capital with all protectors of different cardinal points. Kṛṣṇa, the delight of Yadus bade good-bye to Indra along with the protectors of all the cardinal points.

38-39. He ordered Garuḍa: Let us make a move to Dvārakā. Garuḍa, the enemy of serpents, easily bore Kṛṣṇa, Satyabhāmā and the Pārijāta tree and went to Dvārakā. He

entered the beautiful city of Dvārakā adorned with many gates and portals.

40-41. It was brilliant, decorated with flags, buntings and festoons. Its floors were cleansed and besprinkled. He was worshipped with the attending prominent Yadus by offering him presents, betel-leaves, garlands, perfumes, pigments and unbroken grains of rice. He was saluted and greeted with flourish of trumpets and other instruments sounded on auspicious occasions, as well as with loud chantings of Vedic hymns.

42-43. Kṛṣṇa entered the heavenly assembly-hall *Sudharmā* which was attended by (a council of) elders. He bowed down to Āhuka (Ugrasena), Vasudeva and his elder brother Balarāma in order of seniority. He was duly honoured by them (reciprocally). In that assembly, he occupied an exalted seat of gold.

44. Kṛṣṇa appeared resplendent like Indra attended upon by prominent persons like Bṛhaspati and other protectors of the world in heaven.

45. Kṛṣṇa got the great tree Pārijāta planted in the palace of Satyabhāmā. It was surrounded on all side with pavements of precious stones.

46. Learning that the son of Devakī was coming with a big host of ladies, all the women of Yādava clan came there to see them.

47. Vasudeva as well as all ladies headed by Rohiṇī came to see Lord Kṛṣṇa, returned safe, hale and hearty after conquering the enemy.

48. Beholding that his mother in company of Devakī had come, Kṛṣṇa bowed down to them. They in their turn honoured him with blessings.

49. Similarly, seven beloved queens of Kṛṣṇa such as Rukmiṇī and others who were supremely beautiful and richly adorned, approached their Lord and paid respects to him.

50-51. Revatī, the beloved spouse of Balarāma, the famous Trivakrā, Durgā, Subhadrā and Tārā and other ladies of Bhoja, Vṛṣṇi and Andhaka clans with their faces blooming with joy and affection came to see, out of curiosity, Lord Kṛṣṇa who had returned hale and hearty after vanquishing the

enemies and brought with him a bevy of ladies and Satyabhāmā as also the celestial Pārijāta tree brought from heaven.

53. All the ladies gathered there showered on Kṛṣṇa's head fried grains of rice, flowers and unbroken rice-grains and returned to their respective homes.

## CHAPTER SIXTY-SIX—A

*Slaying of Pauṇḍraka and others*

(This corresponds to VJ.'s Text ch. 69. It gives the following additional verses in the Introduction)

*Śri Śuka said* :

1.1-1.3 : It is reported that at that time there was a king called Pauṇḍraka, O scion of the Kuru race. Getting information of Kṛṣṇa's absence from Dvārakā, he laid siege to that citadel of Vṛṣṇis with a big army and subjected it to attacks. Balarāma, Sātyaki, Vasudeva, Uddhava, Ugrasena and other prominent Yādava warriors treated him (with their military preparations) in a manner suitable for a guest who comes at such a time.

*King Parikṣit enquired* :

1.4 Who was that Pauṇḍraka ? What country did he rule over ? Whose son was he ? Be pleased to narrate all this to me, O sage.

*Śri Śuka narrated* :

1.5 The king of Kāśī had no male issue. He gave his daughter Sutanu to Vasudeva on condition of giving his kingdom as dowry.

1.6 A son with long arms and brilliant like the sun was born to them. He was called Pauṇḍraka. He was powerful, full of prowess and pride.

1.7-1.8 As he was the son of Vasudeva, he was called Vāsudeva. when he became a major the great glorious Vasudeva entrusted to him that kingdom (of Kāśi) along with the treasures, army, chariots and other vehicles. Then

Vasudeva married Kaṁsa's younger sister Devakī who was like a goddess.

1.9 Being interned by Kaṁsa, the king of Bhojas, Vasudeva could not even once visit Karavīrapura.

1.10 Being ever-conscious of the unbearable step-motherly relation and of having no brother of his own, the king of Kāśi lived in awe of Yadus.

1.11 Hearing the report of Kṛṣṇa's absence from Dvārakā, he stormed it at night but he was defeated by Balarāma and Śaineya (Sātyaki).

1.12 Having suffered a heavy loss of thousands of horses, elephants and foot soldiers, he quietly retreated in the latter part of the night to the city of Vārāṇasī.

1.13 When the night was over and the day dawned, Śrī Kṛṣṇa returned from Badarikāśrama by his mount Garuḍa and came to Dvārakā which was well defended by Balarāma.

1.14 He was received with flags and offered water to wash his hands and feet and the usual presents after arrival, by Yādavas, Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas who reported to him the whole story. Then he entered the council hall.

1.15 Once Pauṇḍraka the powerful king of Kāśi.....

(After this follows verse 1-b in ŚR.'s Text in ch. 66)

## CHAPTER EIGHTY-I

*The Story of the Brāhmaṇa Sridāman*

*VJ.'s Text begins* :

1-2A. When the mighty-armed Su (Dur) yodhana was struck down by the mace (of Bhīma) in the battle (and died subsequently), even the glorious Lord Govinda, having accomplished his desired object (of lightening the burden of the earth) made arrangement of leaving the desolate battle field.

2B-5. Kṛpa, Kṛtavarmā and the prominent chariot-warrior Aśvatthāman were the only three great warriors in the army of Su(Dur) yodhana. The survivors on the other (Pāṇḍava) side were the five Pāṇḍava warriors, the mighty Sātyaki, Yuyutsu, the son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra by a Vaiśya woman and other eminent people of whom Kṛṣṇa was prominent. As their leader and accompanied by elderly sages, he went to

Hastināpura for the condolence of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and he consoled Gāndhārī, Dhṛtarāṣṭra and the highly intelligent Vidura.

6-8. With difficulty he installed Pāṇḍavas to carry out their functions in governing their kingdoms. He was glorified by hosts of sages and bards like Sūtas, Māgadhas and Bards and was followed by sons of Pāṇḍu whose eyes were flowing with tears of joy. He took his leave of them, all of whom were sorry, missing him (after his departure). Hari returned to Dvārakā in a chariot brilliant like the Sun. With the loud blast of conchs and beatings of drums and the loud chorus of auspicious Vedic hymns and of incantation of *mantras* repeating the declaration of the day being auspicious he entered Dvārakā.

9-12. The city was decorated by the citizens with various kinds of arches and waving flags and fluttering banners and its grounds (streets, squares, etc.) were sprinkled and washed by them. He was attended upon by citizens who carried in their hands a specific kind of vessel tufted with tender shoots,[1] and by young prominent courtesans adorned with ornaments and by women of the cities and by Brāhmaṇas and their sons, grandsons and with brothers who brought in their hands lamps, mirrors, pots full of water, flowers, fruits, entire grains of rice.

13-14. Hari entered that excellent city on an auspicious day and was worshipped with due formalities. He entered the world-famous celestial assembly-hall *Sudharmā* and paid respects to Āhuka, Vasudeva, Balarāma and bowed to all mothers who were seated on high seats of gold.

15. He took his seat there and was duly worshipped by prominent Yādavas. Like unto the moon surrounded by the constellations of stars and planets in the sky, he shone there (in the assembly hall among the Yādava chiefs).

16-17. Day and night he was attended upon by the powerful monarchs who survived (the Mahābhārata war) and also by sons (of the monarchs killed) who were installed on the thrones of their respective kingdoms. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the support of the Universe, placed Yudhiṣṭhira in the front (of the world as the *bonafide* emperor, but through him) he governed righteously the earth whose burden had now been lightened.

1. Aṅkura-pūrita-pālika-pātra-viśeṣaḥ—VJ.